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THEORY, IDEALS, AND REALITY:
MILITARY THEORY AND THE IDEAL AND REAL ROLES OF
THE PRUSSIAN ARMY, 1830-1871
OR
WHO INFLUENCED THE PRUSSIAN ARMY
AND WHAT MADE THEM DO WHAT THEY DID?

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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GEORGE BENJAMIN EATON

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND IDEAL AND REAL ROLES

War is nothing but the continuation of policy by other means.... Warfare must be subordinate to policy.

Carl von Clausewitz

Carl von Clausewitz (1780- 1831) is often considered the primary theoretical guide of the Prussian and German armies from the 1830's through World War Two. However, a thorough study of military theory and German military history during this period uncovers a divergence from the Clausewitzian principles quoted above, as well as many other concepts in Clausewitz's theory. It is understandable that an army, in practicing the military art, did not fully comply with a certain body of military theory, but the lines above are the heart and soul of Clausewitz's writings. The Prussian and German armies were not adherents to Clausewitz's theory, they merely paid lip service to a fellow Prussian. Clausewitz's Swiss competitor, Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779- 1869), held a greater influence over the Prussian Army,

as a comparison of Jomini's principles and German actions from the 1830's to 1871 will show.

Identifying the correct theoretical underpinnings is only one step in a larger task of understanding the roles that a military organization plays within the state. A military organization has two sets of roles-- the ideal and the real. The first is theory while the second is practice. These different roles are supported by certain goals and missions a military organization wants to accomplish. These roles and goals, supported or determined by theory, help shape the military's attitudes towards the state, other states, and themselves. By understanding the ideal and real roles we can appreciate why a military organization operates in certain patterns.

Understanding the roles of a military organization and how those roles are fulfilled is important in understanding the dramatic national and international changes in late 19th- and early 20th-century Europe. The waves of revolution and war that swept Europe from the 1830's through the 1940's often included military action and other acts of violence. Often there is a perception that either the military acted on its own or that diplomats had an increasing tendency towards choosing military action. Such perceptions are the basis of Gerhard Ritter's conclusion that militarism is "an exaggeration and overestimation of the military estate, unbalancing the natural relation of statesmanship and war."¹ While this may describe the process that led to war, it does not explain the attitude of the military. No matter how quickly statesmen turned to the soldiers, and no matter how important the beliefs of statesmen and general population, the self-

¹ Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany; 2 Volumes, (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1970), Vol II, pp. 23 and 94.

perceived roles of the various national military forces often created the basis for militarism.

What makes the case of Germany so interesting is the large role the German Army had in forming the Twentieth Century.¹ The emergence and activity of a unified Germany was integral to change and history in Europe. The establishment of the German Empire in 1871 was the result of a rapid series of diplomatic and military successes. The Prussian-unified German state suddenly held a commanding position in the geographic center of Europe. Based on Prussia's record during the previous two decades, Europe did not expect German expansion to end. However, while Germany may have pursued a destabilizing foreign policy after 1890, she did not resort to military action and, until 1914, remained at peace. In 1914 Germany unleashed her military strength in one of the world's best known military operations, the Schlieffen Plan. Eventually the world was embroiled in a war due to a military plan that has been described as the "technical exigency" of an apolitical and technical German military working purely in the realm of military theory.² The military machine that was maintained to defend the state was responsible for engaging Germany in a military confrontation that almost destroyed the state by 1918.

During the period from the 1830's to 1871 ideal and real roles for the German military were not in concert. This lack of harmony affected the

¹ References to the "German Army" during the Second Empire are not technically correct, but eases discussion. Different states of the German Empire maintained separate armies which were to come under unified command in time of war. The Prussian Army was the largest and most important of these armies and dominated the others both before and after the establishment of the Second Empire. Most other germanic armies were significantly similar to the Prussian Army in political outlook, sociology, and training. Unless there are specific differences, the term "German Army" will be used.

² Ritter, Vol II, pp. 194, 201-202.

actions of the military and had an adverse impact on the ability of the civilian government to act in the best interests of the German state. The impact of the German military was felt in both domestic and foreign affairs. By exploring the self-perceived roles of the German military and changes in those roles in the years before the formation of the Second Empire, we can better understand how and why the German military was central to change in Europe from the 1860's through 1945. The purpose is not to "blame" the German Army, but to understand how ideal and real roles drove it to act as it did.

This purpose of this thesis is to explore the ideal and real roles in the Prussian Army from the 1830's to 1871. In exploring these roles we will show the influence of theory on the development of ideal and real roles, the dichotomy between the ideal and real roles, and how that dichotomy affected the actions of the German military. Of specific importance is some addition to or expansion of our knowledge of the role of the German military as Germany acted in a central position in the great changes of modern Europe.

Ideal and Real Roles:

Before exploring the theoretical beliefs of Clausewitz and Jomini, the concept of ideal and real roles must be defined and clarified. What is the purpose of any military force and how does a military force meet its intended purpose? Combined in an answer to these questions is a set of distinctions between ideal and real roles. In all military establishments there is a duality between ideal and real roles. The ideal role is the highest

goal of the military, its driving forces, and its ethic. The real role is how the military is used within the state or how the role is translated into specific tasks. The ideal and real roles of the military usually do not coincide, not in terms of effort and attempt, but in terms of the practical and possible. While the military can fulfill in reality some of its ideal roles, some aspects of the ideal can not be fully translated to reality. Can the spiritual become real? On the other hand, can the day to day activities of the military become an ideal?

Exploring the ideal and real roles for the military is not an exercise in defining pure theory and pure practice (where pure theory is the essence of something X, that which all real X's attempt to achieve in form, and pure practice being that X which we as humans can perceive and which is attempting to duplicate the theoretical X). In the case of military organizations, ideal roles are not pure theory. For example: it is unreasonable to believe that there is one ideal role applicable to all military units. Too many variables exist in purpose, ethics, and culture for the existence of one purely theoretical military.

The one ideal common to all military organizations is the concept of defending the existence of something. The possibilities of what is being defended immediately makes clear why there is no one military in pure theory. We can not make one theoretical military cover the roles of national military forces, local military forces, para-military units, or the forces hired to defend private properties, criminal operations, and the like. If we restrict our definition to national military forces, then we can begin to develop a more common set of ideal roles.

The concept of defense and preservation may be a universal ideal role for national militaries. However, "defense" can not be applied equally in all

societies or cultures. The idea presented by some German leaders that the Emperor was the state and therefore the military was defending a person would certainly not be applicable in Western democratic societies or even constitutional monarchies like Nineteenth Century Great Britain. Other aspects of military ideals further restrict one set of roles from being applicable to all national military organizations. In addition to defense, ideal roles reflect the spirit and ethic of the military and, again, these concepts are not universal across all cultures. One of the ideals for the German military was an aloofness from politics coupled with direct loyalty to the monarch. Certainly, Western democracies could not accept this as an ideal, especially when aloofness and loyalty remove the military from the control of elected officials. Not only do some ideals not apply to all societies, they also do not apply to all time periods. Direct loyalty to a monarch was the norm until the Nineteenth Century. The end of absolutism and rise of popular or constitutional governments changed this ideal of the military.

This discussion of pure theory and ideal roles is meant to show that all military forces can not be measured on the same theoretical scale. The specifics of society and culture must be considered. While we can discuss the ideal role of a military in one nation, we can not define "The Military" in purely theoretical or intellectual terms.

Hopefully we have now defined, or at least restricted, the concept of the ideal role for the military. It consists of the universal precept of defending and preserving something; in this case, a state. In addition to this universal element, there are elements peculiar to each different society and culture. These elements give the military its goals, guides, and spirit. They are religious, spiritual, moral, or ethical. Each military force needs these other elements in order to make the universal relate to specific societies and to

provide a general framework for achieving the primary goal of defense and preservation.

Given these elements of ideal roles, what are real roles and how do they relate to the ideal? Real roles are defined differently because they cross from the concept of a role (eg., defender of the state) to the process of actually fulfilling a role through action. Real roles are the manner in which military forces actually defend their society. They are expressed in unit organizations, weapons, size, strategy, and tactics. Real roles are reflected in the actual relationships of the military to government and the establishment of constraints in allowing means to meet ends. Real roles are the way a particular military organization operates in normal operations. Because of the pressures of daily operations and demands, or inconsistencies in between ideal roles, real roles may not be able to achieve the goals set by the ideal roles. Real roles reflect the restrictions imposed on theory by reality.

A final question relating to ideal and real roles is how, or why, ideal and real roles change within a society over time? In the case of ideal roles, the basic concept of defense and preservation does not change, but, as already noted, that which is being defended can change. The other elements of ideal roles can change as societies adopt new moral guides or previously held spiritual elements evolve or are discarded. However, with the exception of a radical change in the type of government, catastrophic military defeat, or overwhelming victory, ideals change infrequently and slowly. On the other hand, real roles change often and quickly. Developments in management or leadership techniques, weapon capabilities, or the type of threat to a state can quickly alter the real roles of a military unit

Having moved from the specifics of the German military in the 19th and 20th Centuries, to the more universal nature of concepts and definitions, let us again narrow the scope and explore the military theory of Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

It is in Jominian rather than in Clausewitzian terms that soldiers are trained to think.

Essentially it was Jominian rather than a Clausewitzian attitude that dominated military thinking.

If there can be such a thing as a joke in military history, surely a small one is the belief that with the posthumous publication of Clausewitz in the 1830s On War became the bible of the Prussian Army...The truth is that most German students of war found Clausewitz no less difficult, obscure, and of doubtful utility than did non-Germans.¹

As the above quotes suggest, some military historians disagree with the common belief that Clausewitz was the primary basis for the ideal and real roles of the German Army. In fact, the German military leadership may not have understood all the implications of Clausewitz's theories, while believing that they were Clausewitzian. While theoretical foundations do not have to be fully understood by the military to act as a guide to ideal roles, there must

¹ Michael Howard, "Jomini and the Classical Tradition in Military Thought", in Howard, ed., The Theory and Practice of War, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 13.; Peter Paret, "Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century," in Howard, ed., p. 31; John Shy, "Jomini", in Peter Paret, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 177.

be some understanding of theory to support real roles. However, while the military may not need an understanding of the theory behind both ideal and real roles, it is important for us as scholars to recognize which military theorists were guiding the German Army.

In the period before the Napoleonic Wars military theory was primarily reductionist. Most theorists believed that war could be reduced to a relatively few maxims and principles which guided the military commander. War was primarily a series of marches and maneuvers. As the armies were a combination of nobility and mercenaries, each a costly resource, commanders attempted to gain the upper hand through maneuver so that a battle would not have to be fought. The Napoleonic Wars changed warfare into a series of large battles with huge armies, and military theory began to change to explain the new style of war.

In the late 18th Century, military theory was based on the writings of Marshal de Saxe and the Englishman Henry Lloyd. Both were part of a tradition of scientific (Enlightenment) application of principles with some consideration of the moral and philosophical role of war as a subset of state policy. In the Napoleonic period two main schools of thought developed from Lloyd's teachings. One was the school which relied on scientific principle and wrote in terms of maxims, principles, topography, and logistics. The other school was more concerned with the moral, political, and metaphysical aspects of war. To the second school, war was unpredictable and based on moral fiber, will, and personality.² Jomini was, during the 19th-Century, the best known figure from the first school while Clausewitz continues to

² Michael Howard, "Jomini and the Classical Tradition in Military Thought", in Howard, ed., pp. 6-8.

dominate the second school. An understanding of the lives, publication history, intent, and key thoughts of these two men is essential in understanding the ideal and real roles of the German Army.

Carl Maria von Clausewitz (1780- 1831)

Carl Maria von Clausewitz was the son of a middle-level Prussian bureaucrat.³ His father had served in the Army of Frederick the Great, but had been released from service in the peace that followed the Frederician Wars. The family claim to nobility was murky, at best. Frederick II refused to recognize the family claim and it was not until 1827, after Carl v. Clausewitz had gained some prestige, that Frederick William III officially recognized the family as nobility.

Clausewitz served throughout the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon. He joined the Prussian army in 1792 and fought in the campaigns of 1792-93. After those wars and a period in garrison training, Clausewitz attended the newly revived Berlin Institute in the Military Sciences for Young Infantry and Cavalry Officers (the Berlin Institute) where he graduated as the co-honor student in 1804. He was appointed as an aide to Prince August and was captured with the Prince in the campaign of 1806. The two spent some ten months in captivity in France and several more months in Switzerland on the way back to Berlin.

³ See Peter Paret, Clausewitz and the State, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) *passim* for biographical details.

During the time Clausewitz was in school, the Berlin Institute was being revived by the great Hanoverian general Gerhard Scharnhorst who was using education as one of several tools to reform the Prussian army and the state. After his return from captivity Clausewitz was again in contact with Scharnhorst and was soon a key member of the reform movement. Even before the campaign of 1806 Clausewitz was regarded by the king as a liberal and intellectual officer. Clausewitz's loyalty to the state (or at least to the king) was in question. His return to Berlin did nothing to change that. The reform movement sought to liberalize the Prussian army as one step in making the people greater participants in the state. They sought to involve the middle classes, maintain the *Landwehr* (Prussia's militia), soften discipline, institute universal military service, and make promotions based on merit. The reformers also wished to modify the structure of the state through the adoption of a constitution. Scharnhorst and his followers were not proposing change for the sake of change. They believed that the Prussian state was based on military power and maintained its international prestige through military power. The only way they could maintain their position against the new national army of France was to reform the state and give the people a greater stake in the state's survival. Their intent was not appreciated by the monarchy or by senior military figures. The distrust of the reformers was confirmed when they displayed greater loyalty to their beliefs than to their monarch. Clausewitz, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and others resigned from the Prussian Army in 1812 when Prussia allied with France. They were soon in the Russian army fighting France.

Clausewitz rejoined the Prussian army in 1815 and served in various staff positions. Until the end of his life he remained on the outside of the Prussian military. Clausewitz remained a friend of Gneisenau, who insured that he

could remain in the service, but he was distrusted by the conservative core of the army. In 1818 he was assigned as head of The Berlin Institute (by now renamed the War College), a position which held the rank of major general. The position was mainly administrative and Clausewitz spent most of his time writing. In 1830 he received a position as inspector of the artillery, but was called to be Gneisenau's chief of staff for the field army created during the Polish Insurrection of 1830. He was in Posen in 1831 as the Russians and Poles fought around Warsaw. Gneisenau died in July 1831 in Posen, a victim of the great cholera epidemic that had spread from Russia. Clausewitz died on November 16, 1831 in Breslau, also a victim of cholera.

Clausewitz was not a man who sought publicity and did not publish many of his writings during his life. He had some articles and pamphlets in print, but was mainly known through direct contact and teaching. His wife had his life's work, On War, posthumously published in 1832 as well as other writings on the military. His works on politics and government were not published until the 1870s. On War was successful enough to soon have further editions printed, but was difficult for many to read and understand. A few principles were easily memorized and used as evidence of understanding Clausewitz's theory of war, but most military officers probably had neither the time nor the inclination to study him deeply. Officers primarily remembered sub-elements rather than the overall intent and some editions deliberately twisted key portions of his work to better support the accepted theory of the period.⁴

Clausewitz wished to explore the spiritual and moral aspects of war. He believed that once military leaders understood the spiritual basis of war, the

⁴ Parot, "Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century", pp. 23-24.

actual fighting of campaigns would be much easier. His writing style contributed to his being misunderstood by generations of readers. He wrote in a dialectic that explored all sides of any issue. He would explore the ideal theory of war and then try to apply it to the real battlefield, the only place where theory could be applied. "If we were to think purely in absolute terms, we could avoid every difficulty by a stroke of the pen and proclaim with inflexible logic that, since the extreme must always be the goal, the greatest effort must always be exerted. Any such pronouncement would...leave the real world quite unaffected."⁵ Because of this method it is easy to read whole passages of On War only to find later that he was exploring an aspect of his theory that was eventually rejected or which applied only to theoretical war.

His work is even more confusing in that he considered much of it unfinished. A note of 10 July, 1827 reveals that Clausewitz felt an entire reworking of On War would be required before it could be published. He was only able to revise the first chapter before he died. That same note makes clear the dual intent of the book. First, he wished to bring out the fact that there were two types of war. The first type was waged "to *overthrow the enemy*-- to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent, thus forcing him to sign whatever peace we please." The objective of the second type of war was "*merely to occupy some of his [the enemies] frontier-districts* so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations."⁶ His second intent was to make it absolutely clear that "*war is*

⁵ Clausewitz, On War (Michael Howard and Peter Paret, editors and translators), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 78. (Hereafter referred to as Clausewitz.)

⁶ Clausewitz, p. 69. Italics in the original.

nothing but the continuation of policy with other means"⁷ Understanding these two points was to be the key to understanding On War, and yet, many military readers failed to understand or accept either. If Clausewitz is misunderstood or misapplied, much of the fault lies in his refusal to publish while he was alive or his inability to complete the revisions of On War. Perhaps if he had been alive to defend himself and his book, he would have made a greater real impact.

Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779-1869)

Antoine-Henri Jomini was the son of a middle-class Swiss family.⁸ He began a banking career in Paris, but ended that by joining the French Army in 1796. After a humble beginning as a supply clerk, Jomini was able to get some of his writings passed to Napoleon, who read and liked what he had been given. Napoleon took a personal interest in Jomini's career, speeding promotions. By 1806 Jomini was a full colonel. After a term on the Emperor's personal staff where he worked on writing military history, Napoleon assigned Jomini to be Chief of Staff of the famous Marshal Ney. In that capacity Jomini took part in the great campaigns of 1812-1813 and was the governor of Smolensk during the invasion of Russia.

While Napoleon may have been a positive role in Jomini's career, Napoleon's Chief of Staff, Louis-Alexandre Berthier, considered Jomini to be merely an intellectual and tried to block his advancement. When Jomini's promotion to major general was denied in 1813, he accepted the offer of

⁷ Clausewitz, p. 69. Italics in the original.

⁸ See Introduction to Jomini, Summary of the Art of War, J.D. Hittle, ed. (Harrisburg, Pa: Military Service Publishing Company, 1952) passim for biographical details. (Hereafter referred to as Jomini).

Alexander I and became a full general in the Russian Army. After the completion of the Napoleonic Wars, Jomini was active in trying to improve the military education of the Russian Army. He wrote and published military theory and history and he founded the Nicholas Military Academy (1832). He advised the crown on military affairs, including the Polish Insurrection, wars with Persia and Turkey and the Crimean War. Other European powers also considered him as a leading consultant and sought his advice.

Jomini published as he wrote and there was a continuity to his writings, each piece building on the works before, with no major shifts or reversals in the basics. He was often immediately accepted by the military forces of Europe. His Traité des Grandes Opérations Militaires, the work that had impressed Napoleon, was published in 1804 and was translated into German by 1811. Other works were published in German as early as 1806.⁹ His theoretical writings culminated in Précis de l'Art de la Guerre in 1838 (translated as Summary of the Art of War). His works were also widely accepted in the United States. "It has been said with good reason that many a Civil War general went into battle with a sword in one hand and Jomini's Summary of the Art of War in the other."¹⁰ The military men of his period wanted some simplistic methodology for warfare, and Jomini gave it to them.

Jomini's intent in writing was to reveal the basic principles which had to be used to wage war successfully. He wrote in Traité, "There have existed in all times fundamental principles on which depend good results in warfare... these principles are unchanging, independent of the kinds of weapons, of

⁹ See John Alger, Antoine-Henri Jomini: A Bibliographical Survey, (West Point, New York: United States Military Academy, 1975), *passim*.

¹⁰ Jomini, p. 2 (In introduction by J. Hittle, ed.).

historical time and of place."¹¹ Jomini recognized that the Napoleonic Wars had revolutionized the way war was conducted in Europe. He, more than any other writer "...assembled, analyzed, standardized, and codified the military method and thought inherent in the Napoleonic concept of war."¹² In some ways his works, especially Summary, read like an outline for a military education program.

Jomini's principles can be summarized in the concept of finding the decisive point and applying overwhelming pressure at that point, attacking the enemy's lines of communication, and forcing the enemy to abandon the battlefield. The majority of his work is an explanation of how to achieve the blow at the decisive point. Jomini considered himself different from pre-Napoleonic theorists and those who criticized him. He felt that most of those who disagreed with him, Clausewitz included, misunderstood Napoleon's revival of active, battle-oriented warfare. "They want war too methodical, too measured; I would make it brisk, bold, impetuous, perhaps even audacious."¹³ In such concepts Jomini laid the path for quick, decisive battles of penetration which could be seen in the conduct of the Franco-Prussian War, the opening months of World War One, and the blitzkrieg tactics of World War Two.

Key Ideas

Jomini and Clausewitz held many of the same concepts of tactics. This is only natural as both were writing from a common experience gained in the Napoleonic Wars. However, while Clausewitz concentrated on higher theory

¹¹ Jomini, p. 9.

¹² Jomini, p. 37.

¹³ Jomini, p. 84.

and strategy (the way the nation wages war), Jomini concentrated more on tactics and a lower strategy (the way armies conduct operations and battles). Many of Clausewitz's thoughts find opposites in Jomini's writings. One expert on Jomini has written, "The fundamental difference between Clausewitz and Jomini is that while the Prussian roamed in the psychological and philosophic domains of battle, peering into the metaphysical darkness whence comes the intangible but nevertheless omni-present components of battle, Jomini was more concerned with the tangible."¹⁴ It is important to understand these differences (whether they be differences in metaphysical and tangible worlds or just differing conclusions) if we are to understand the influence of both theorists on the ideal and real roles of the Prussian Army. We shall summarize their beliefs on the following subjects: the purpose of writing, the use of history; the best types of government; the role of politics in warfare; the idea and role of the staff; the preferable form of warfare; and the importance of the battle.

-- The Purpose in Writing and the Use of Theory:

Clausewitz's and Jomini's primary intents or goals have been noted above. The key difference is that Clausewitz never conceived of his works as being used as a battlefield textbook, while Jomini did. Each man wrote for kings, princes, and senior commanders, but Jomini thought that his work could be applied to the leader at all levels, down to platoon. Jomini intended to explain the scientific principle which regulated warfare. He knew that there was an element of chance on the battlefield, but he believed that the application of his principles would help in the chaos of battle. The man of

¹⁴ Jomini, pp. 14-15.

genius would automatically be able to apply the correct methods in warfare, but the man who carefully studied Jomini's principles would not need genius.¹⁵ As such, Jomini believed that Summary could "be offered as the book most suitable for the instruction of a prince or statesman."¹⁶

While Jomini may have protested that war could not "be reduced to mathematical calculations", his critics, and a close reading of Summary, indicate that he attempted to do just that. One group of scholars accuses him of overlooking the role of chance and of being molded by the purely military. Another defined his work as asserting strategy as the key to warfare, but strategy as controlled by invariable scientific principles.¹⁷ Jomini belies his own protests when he writes, "Of all the theories on the art of war, the only reasonable one is that which... admits a certain number of regulating principles..." or "[t]here exists a small number of fundamental principles of war, which could not be deviated from without danger..."¹⁸

Even if there is some disagreement over Jomini's reliance on mathematical certainty and principle, there is no doubt on one purpose in his military theory-- he wanted future commanders to apply the principles of war as Napoleon had done, while avoiding Napoleon's mistakes. Napoleon had broken from the custom of the day and had adhered to the rules of nature, but he had also broken some of nature's rules. Jomini was afraid that others would break those rules and war would return to the methods of Vandals

¹⁵ Jomini, p. 43.

¹⁶ Jomini, p. 44.

¹⁷ Jomini, p. 43; Crane Brinton, Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert, "Jomini" in Edward Mead Earle, ed., The Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943, (1971 printing)), p. 91; Shy, p. 146.

¹⁸ Jomini, p. 43.

and Huns.¹⁹ In Summary he wrote, "[Napoleon's] victories teach what may be accomplished by activity, boldness, and skill; his disasters, what might have been avoided by prudence." "Theories will always point out the errors which should be avoided."²⁰ Even the genius needed a theoritician to make him toe the line.

Clausewitz's intent is both easier to state and more difficult to grasp. He wanted to show that war transcends the purely military.²¹ He wanted the state to become more involved in the entire process, just as he wanted the state to grant a greater role to the people. If the entire state became more involved, then war would have to be evaluated based on political utility and maintenance of the military would improve the polity.²² This would be a great difference from the days when only monarchy and nobility determined the actions of the state.

In addition to this intent, Clausewitz wanted to explore the difference between the ideal and real nature of war. He felt that only by understanding the nature of war could men successfully act on the real battlefield. He believed that prescription was secondary to analysis and that war could not be mechanically pursued. Being able to devise strategic plans was less important than understanding the permanent elements of war. One had to understand before actions could be taken.²³ However, making the task more difficult was the belief that there was no norm in the actual world. Each war had its own essence and there was no one type of war to establish as a

¹⁹ Brinton, Craig, and Gilbert, pp. 91-92.

²⁰ Jomini, pp. 49 and 159.

²¹ Peter Paret, "Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century", p. 32.

²² Paret, Clausewitz and the State, pp. 7-8.

²³ Peter Paret, "Clausewitz," in Paret, Makers of Modern Strategy, p. 187.

standard to guide all other wars. Too many outside elements affected the prosecution of war.²⁴ Clausewitz believed that there may be laws in the realm of ideals, but "no prescriptive formula universal enough to deserve the name of law can be applied to the constant change and diversity of the phenomenon of war."²⁵ All the real world could use were some principles and methods. Clausewitz's goal was to determine the essence of ideal war so that he and others could understand the roles war takes in the real world, its political implications, and the real application of strategy and tactics.²⁶

--The Use of History:

Jomini and Clausewitz used history differently. Jomini believed that military theory was derived from the experience of the battlefield. Once principles and maxims became apparent, he used military history to find examples which clarified the theory. Jomini "used history didactically; great captains themselves, he claimed, confirmed the truth of his theory."²⁷

Clausewitz believed that through the proper study of military history, certain theories would become apparent. Once those theories became apparent, then military history could be used as examples or illustrations. History was not just a source of examples, but provided insight.²⁸ While Clausewitz acknowledged the use of historical example to give clarifications of theory, he felt that the more important use of history was in the deduction of

²⁴ Paret, "Clausewitz", p. 200.

²⁵ Clausewitz, p. 152.

²⁶ Paret, "Clausewitz", p. 198.

²⁷ Jomini, p. 41-2; Alger, p. 20.

²⁸ Paret, Clausewitz and the State, p. 81.

theory. "[T]he detailed presentation of a historical event...make it possible to deduce a doctrine: the proof is in the evidence itself."²⁹

The problem with Jomini's approach is that there may be as many bad examples as good. Clausewitz notes that for every example where application of a theory led to success, he could find an example where it led to failure. He also criticized Jomini for his poor historical judgement.³⁰ On the other hand, Clausewitz's method may not reveal theories that are applicable to the modern world, or history may be so poorly written and incomplete that theories may not be apparent; in fact, Clausewitz condemned ancient history as practically worthless because it was not precise.³¹ Jomini wrote that "correct theories, founded upon right principles, sustained by actual events of wars, *and added to accurate military history*, will form a true school of instruction."³² Clausewitz might reply: "this is clearly a dangerous expedient, and is frequently misused."³³ The use of the inductive method of proving theory can be dangerous and blind the theoretician to theoretical defects.

--The Form of Government:

Clausewitz and Jomini clearly stated their convictions about the proper form of government to best support the military effort. Clausewitz believed that a loose republic or federation best met the needs of the German people and therefore produced the greatest amount of effort from the population. However, he also recognized that the geographic position of the German states required a stronger centralized government. He leaned

²⁹ Clausewitz, p. 171.

³⁰ Clausewitz, p. 172; Shy, p. 168.

³¹ Clausewitz, p. 173.

³² Jomini, p. 160, *italics added*.

³³ Clausewitz, p. 172.

towards some form of constitutional government which would limit the monarchy while granting the people a role in the state.³⁴ If not specific on the form of government, Clausewitz clearly felt that absolutism had created a gulf between the monarchy and nobility and the people. War and the army had become exclusively the monarch's domain. Broadening the political base would strengthen the state and make it more militarily powerful.³⁵

Jomini tended towards the opposite view, at least in relation to the merits of increasing popular political involvement. He felt that kings should be soldier/statesmen and that the best government was one where the political authority and military command were vested in the same person. The successes of Frederick the Great and Napoleon supported this belief. But, he also believed that when the sovereign lacked military ability he should be kept far away from the military.³⁶ Jomini saw the popularization of politics as a negative change. So long as the nobility was the officer corps, the military was, by definition, subject only to the monarchy. But democratization and meritocracy changed that relationship and threatened to make the military merely another part of the state organization. When the monarchy and aristocracy no longer controlled the state, politics became a problem.³⁷ More clearly, Jomini believed that governments with elective legislatures were less suitable for the formation and maintenance of a strong military organization. Additionally, the legislature would combine budgetary power with dislike of the monarchy and subvert the military's ability to wage war: "When control of the public funds is in the hands of those affected

³⁴ Parot, Clausewitz and the State, pp. 133 and 138.

³⁵ Clausewitz, p. 589; Parot, "Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century", p. 36.

³⁶ Shy, p. 161; Howard, "Jomini and the Classical Tradition in Military Thought", p. 15.

³⁷ Shy, pp. 160-161.

by...party spirit, they may be so over-scrupulous and penurious as to take all power to carry on war from the executive, whom many people seem to regard as a public enemy..."³⁸

--The Role of Politics in Warfare:

Here again, Clausewitz is very clear. If warfare is merely the extension of policy by other means, then warfare must be subordinate to politics and policy. Clausewitz clarifies himself even further by stating that the military remains subordinate to policy and politics even after war is declared. "That the political point of view should wholly cease to count on the outbreak of war is hardly conceivable.... Subordinating the political point of view to the military [once war has started] would be absurd, for it is policy that has created war."³⁹ As political aims are the ends while force is only the means, war can only modify political aims. Politicians should assist in formulating military plans, but the military commander must not become involved in political decisions.⁴⁰ Clausewitz was insistent that the military could not even plan for war without having some political aims on which to base strategy. Towards the end of his life he returned a War College exercise on planning a particular campaign. He wrote that he could not complete it without political input. In On War he codifies that position by writing: "If planning a war precludes adopting a dual or multiple point of view-- that is, applying first a military, then an administrative eye, then a political eye and

³⁸ Jomini, pp. 56-57.

³⁹ Clausewitz, p. 607.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, p. 608. This idea was so against the nineteenth century norm, that in the second edition (1853) some clauses were changed to imply the opposite. See Eds. FM Clausewitz, p. 608 and Jehuda L. Wallach, The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, (London: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 14, 31-31.

so on-- the question arises whether *policy* is bound to be given precedence over everything."⁴¹

Jomini, on the other hand, believed that military action must be abstracted from the political. War was a game of chess, played in the realm of the purely military. He felt that once war began, states should choose able commanders and leave them free to wage war. By way of example, Jomini notes the negative impact the government had on Austrian commanders between 1756 and 1815-- "A general whose genius and hands are tied by an Aulic council five hundred miles distant cannot be a match for one who has liberty of action..."⁴² To Jomini "policy" seems to be concerned with the enemy's organization while "politics" is concerned with how friendly forces are organized.⁴³ This does not leave much room for political control of the military on campaign. Some historians have blamed Jomini's views on the interference of politics in the execution of war with contributing to the Nineteenth- and early Twentieth-century gulf between military and political authority.

--The Role and Use of the Staff:

Clausewitz and Jomini were both staff officers and Chiefs of Staff at the corps level or higher and, therefore, both knew how staffs should operate. Napoleon brought the use of staffs into modern warfare. He recognized that most generals (himself not included) required trained staff officers to assist in the myriad of details required for modern warfare. While Frederick the Great kept so many details to himself that he once said he would throw his

⁴¹ Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, p. 379; Clausewitz, p. 606, italics in the original.

⁴² Shy, p. 161; Jomini, p. 55.

⁴³ Jomini, pp. 53-54.

nightcap into the fire if he thought it knew what he was thinking, the Prussian army, under the reforms of Scharnhorst, recognized the need for good staffs. Clausewitz assisted the reformers in implementing staff work in the Prussian Army. The General Staff was to assist the supreme commander comprehend and act on the myriad of details inherent in Napoleonic and post-Napoeonic warfare. The staff was to insure that strategic purpose and firm coordination were accomplished by directing military education, planning, and command functions.⁴⁴ Of course, as noted above, this did not mean strategic planning void of political direction.

Jomini was more specific than Clausewitz on the duties of a staff. Staffs were supposed to draw up all types of contingency plans as well as assist the commander in all aspects of logistics. If the sovereign is not experienced in campaigning he was to be accompanied by two staff officer as advisors. He went on to insist that staff officers made better commanders than generals who had been limited to the cavalry or infantry.⁴⁵ The planning role of the staff was key to Jomini's concept of eliminating chance from warfare. The more the staffs planned, and the more contingencies they considered, the more chance could be eliminated from war. To assist in planning, the staff was to maintain historical archives. Having a staff was one of Jomini's "12 Essential Conditions" for providing an effective military and the General Staff was to be a government's War Office.⁴⁶ Jomini's concepts are considered to be the most effective piece of staff writing to come from the Napoleonic

⁴⁴ Paré, "Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century", p. 29.

⁴⁵ Jomini, pp. 61 and 132. Pp. 136-140 describe staff functions.

⁴⁶ Jomini, pp. 55-59.

period. The permanent staffs adopted by almost all sovereign nations are proof of Jomini's impact on military organization.⁴⁷

--The Types of Warfare and the Extent of Warfare:

One of the widest points of divergence between Jomini and Clausewitz (and one of the points most often misunderstood by military men) is their belief in the proper form of warfare. Jomini was truly of the Napoleonic school and believed that the offense was the stronger form of war. Only through use of the offense could wars be won. Jomini had analysed the campaigns of Napoleon and compared them with Frederician warfare. Only by attacking the enemy at a decisive point, and with stronger forces, could victory be won. Strategy was the study of how to best attack and win. Jomini's concepts did not change during his years of military service. In 1803's Traité he wrote: "... That these principles [strategy] prescribe offensive action to mass forces against weaker enemy forces at some decisive point if strategy is to lead to victory."⁴⁸ The insistence on massing forces on a decisive point implies offensive action, and Jomini clarifies the point: "Indeed, if the art of war consists in throwing the masses upon the decisive points, it is necessary to take the initiative" and "[i]n a moral and political view the offensive is nearly always advantageous...."⁴⁹ The defensive was used only to regain the offensive. Jomini thought that "to bury an army in intrenchments... is manifest folly."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Hittle, ed., in "Introduction" to Jomini, pp. 23 and 27.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Shy, "Jomini", p. 146.

⁴⁹ Jomini, pp. 69 and 68.

⁵⁰ Jomini, p. 90.

Clausewitz believed that the defensive was the stronger form of war and that the concept of winning and losing depended on the political aims of the war. He was sceptical as to the moral superiority of the offense and believed that the defender tended to hold the final hand. It is easier to maintain what one has than to take new territories.⁵¹ If an army is on the offensive, its aim is positive; the defending army has a negative aim. This is the paradox he refers to when he states "that defense is the stronger form of fighting with the negative purpose, attack the weaker form with the positive purpose."⁵² However, Clausewitz understood that if the political aims of a nation were positive, requiring some action to be taken, then the nation would have to move to the offensive. In such a case (in agreement with Jomini) the defensive battle is only temporary; a period of saving strength until the commander can make "a sudden powerful transition to the offensive-- the flashing sword of vengeance."⁵³ Again, it is the political aim that determines the mode.

In addition to confusion over the stronger method warfare, Clausewitz is often misunderstood in his concept of the scope of warfare. As noted before, he believed that war could aim at the destruction of the enemy or merely at holding some of the enemy's territory. Many theorists who claim a Clausewitzian outlook speak only of Clausewitz's reference to the natural movement in warfare to the use of extremes. War is violent and since nations are competing, violence escalates until the total war is reached; however, this is only so in the realm of theory.⁵⁴ Most military writers have

⁵¹ Hans Rothfels, "Clausewitz", in Earle, ed., p. 110; Clausewitz, p. 545; and Clausewitz, pp. 357-59.

⁵² Clausewitz, p. 71.

⁵³ Clausewitz, p. 370.

⁵⁴ Clausewitz, pp. 75-77.

missed Clausewitz's distinction between theory and reality when it comes to the scope of war. Only in the theoretical sense was warfare absolute and total. In reality, war was limited, or could be, and total destruction of the enemy was not required. "Wars vary with the nature of their motives."⁵⁵ Clausewitz can be considered the father of the modern concept of limited war.

Jomini's concept of the scope of warfare is, due to his concentration on the tactical level, more limited. To Jomini, if war is between nations, it is automatically total and all future European wars would be total.⁵⁶ He lists six different kinds of war but he does not make any comment on the possibility that different wars could be 'non-total'.⁵⁷

--The Role of the Battle:

Jomini's theory, based on topography and science, leads to warfare designed to occupy and control geography. Clausewitz believed that the destruction of enemy forces was the purpose of battle. Jomini returns time and again to a geographic goal. Massing against a decisive point or flanking an enemy force and cutting communications are methods of driving the enemy from his position. The geometrical formations he discusses, lines of attack, strategic geographic points, and controlling more than two sides of the rectangular battlefield all support the control of territory. The enemy is destroyed so that territories will fall.⁵⁸ "The objective of an offensive battle can only be to dislodge the enemy or to cut his line, unless it is intended by

⁵⁵ Clausewitz, p. 88.

⁵⁶ Jomini, p. 34.

⁵⁷ Jomini, p. 45. The different types of war are: To reclaim certain rights; To protect and maintain the great interests of the state; To maintain the balance of power; For ideological or religious beliefs; To increase power and influence through territorial acquisition; To gratify a mania for conquest.

⁵⁸ Jomini, see Chapters 3 and 4, *passim* and Brinton, Craig, and Gilbert, pp. 88-89.

strategic maneuvers to ruin his army completely."⁵⁹ The "unless" in the preceding quote speaks more by what it leaves out. "Unless" the aim is to destroy the enemy, the goal must be clearing territory. More clearly, "In strategy, the object of the campaign determines the objective point. If the aim be offensive, the point will be that of the hostile capital or that of a province whose loss would compel the enemy to make peace. In a war of invasion the capital is, ordinarily, the objective point."⁶⁰

To Clausewitz, the role of the battle was to destroy or disarm the enemy. However, when not writing of theoretical warfare, the destruction or disarming of the enemy could involve only a small amount of violence. The battle required only enough force to make the enemy quit the field or submit to surrender negotiations. Again, political aim determined the amount of force required to 'destroy the enemy'. In fact, at times, no force was required. The bluff was often as effective as pitched battle. "The fighting forces...must be put in such a position that they can no longer carry on the fight."⁶¹ Bluff or destruction of the enemy's morale could reduce the opposition to such a condition. If it actually came to fighting, then defeat of the enemy was the destruction of enough forces to make him quit fighting.⁶² Either through bluff or fighting, destruction of enemy forces was more important than occupying territory. The clearest example was Napoleon's invasion of Russia. The French occupied the capital, and huge tracts of Russian territory. However, so long as the Russian army remained intact and willing to fight, the invasion would not be successful.⁶³ The conquest of

⁵⁹ Jomini, p. 105.

⁶⁰ Jomini, p. 74.

⁶¹ Clausewitz, p. 90.

⁶² Clausewitz, p. 227.

⁶³ Clausewitz, p. 582.

enemy territory may help a country achieve its political aims; however the point was not killing the enemy or just occupying territory, but destroying the enemy's will to resist and compelling the enemy to do your will.⁶⁴

Who Influenced the German Military?:

Having explored the theoretical beliefs of Clausewitz and Jomini, we must now return to the question of which of them held a greater influence on the German military and contributed to its ideal and real roles. The quotes which opened this chapter express a belief that Clausewitz was neither greatly understood nor used by the German military before 1871. This belief is not widely shared. Even such noted military historians as Michael Howard, Gordon Craig, Jay Luvaas, and B.H. Liddell Hart have incorrectly applied to the German Army or misstated certain Clausewitzian principles (a good example is the belief that Clausewitz insisted that all future wars would be total). Of course, that does not mean, by extension, that Jomini was the greater influence.

While we can not prove that the German military read and adopted Jomini's theories, we can make some conclusions based on what we already know. Jomini was widely read by the military and was translated into German as early as 1806.⁶⁵ As an aide to the usually victorious Napoleon, Jomini's views could be considered a "winning combination". As stated in Chapter 1, it is a subgoal of this paper to show that, although he concentrated on the practical, Jomini influenced the German military in the realm of both ideal and real roles. His influence, and the divergence from Clausewitz's

⁶⁴ Clausewitz, pp. 75-76.

⁶⁵ Clausewitz's works were published in quarto indicating a large number of sales. See Alger.

theories, will be noted in each discussion of real and ideal roles. At the least, we can show that Clausewitz was not the primary influence on the German military from the 1830's until 1871.

CHAPTER 3: IDEAL ROLES FOR THE PRUSSIAN ARMY BEFORE 1871

The theories and concepts established in the previous chapters will be used in the rest of this thesis to help us state and follow the development of the ideal and real roles of the German Army. The remainder of this paper will note the extent of Jominian and Clausewitzian influence on the Prussian Army prior to 1871, explore the differences between ideal and real roles, and note changes in those roles. This chapter will explore the ideal roles of the Prussian Army prior to 1871. Chapter 4 will discuss the real roles of the Prussian Army and Chapter 5 will quickly explore the impact of Jomini and Clausewitz on the Prussian Army during the same period.

The Prussian Army underwent a series of changes and experimentation between the Napoleonic Wars and the Franco-Prussian War. The period from 1815 to 1870 can be characterized by a liberal-reaction-consolidation process. Some of the liberal reforms noted in previous chapters, e.g., constitutional government, were rejected when the Napoleonic threat was defeated. Other attempted changes, e.g., a military open to all classes and educational requirements, were allowed to wither. While the liberalizing reforms of Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Clausewitz were short-lived, it took

over twenty years for conservatives to completely change course and rid the army of their effects. Concurrently with the institutional reaction within the army, there was a liberalizing movement in Prussian society and politics. The Prussian Army was forced to confront these societal changes.

By the end of the Revolution of 1848 the Prussian Army had reestablished itself as a conservative institution within the state. While some historians have described the military of the Second Empire as a "state within the state"¹, this separation was evident well before 1871. The ideals of the reactionary, conservative leadership of the military from the 1830's to 1871 demanded the isolation of the military from the rest of Prussian society. The major ideal roles of the Prussian Army were: Defender of the State, Defender and Supporter of the Monarch, and Maintainer of the Army's Honor. The primary theoretical acts that supported these roles and the conservative spirit of the Prussian Army were: defense of the state, maintenance of the primacy of absolutism, support of the King as *oberster Kriegsherr* or Supreme War Lord, maintenance of the officer code, and maintaining the Army's position as a separate state and aloof from politics. These acts will be discussed below.

Defense of the State:

As noted in Chapter 1, the defense of the state is the one universal goal for all national military organizations, and the Prussian Army certainly held this as one of its own ideal roles. The reformers of the Napoleonic Wars had

¹ Gordon Craig, Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640-1945, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), Heading to Chapter Six. (Hereafter referred to as Craig, Politics.)

one primary intent, to increase popular participation in government and the army in order to increase the state's ability to protect itself.² The conservative reactionaries of the 1815-1871 period supported the same ideal goal, but utilized different means. The conservatives tried to restrict popular and constitutional input to the military because they believed an isolated military was more efficient and, therefore, the best defense of the state.³ Some historians would disagree with the conservatives. For example, Alfred Vagts believes that the Prussian military was more concerned with preserving itself than with defending the state.⁴ We will have a chance to evaluate Vagts's comments in the next chapter when the actions of the army are discussed.

Perhaps a better way of describing this ideal act is to call it "preserving the state". This use allows us to include both physical and ideological defense of the state. The ideological defense of the state was not just support of the monarchical principle, which will be discussed below, but a conservative defense of the *status quo*. Support of the *status quo* included a defense from foreign military aggression, defense against French-supported national uprisings, and a denial of the expansion of Prussia.⁵

Physical defense of the state was directed primarily against France--the seemingly eternal German enemy. The Prussian Army was generally not concerned over a military threat from Russia or Austria; however, as early

² See references to the liberal reforms in previous chapters.

³ Craig, *Politics*, p. 183; Hejo Holborn, "The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff", in Paret, *Makers*, p. 285.

⁴ Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, (New York: Meridian Books, Inc. 1959), p. 15. (Hereafter referred to as *Militarism*) Vagts comments here are not specifically about the Prussians, but later comments imply that he meant the Prussian Army.

⁵ Craig, *Politics*, p. 132.

as the 1820's military leaders were afraid that the French government would be able to rebuild its army and set out again in pursuit of revolutionary goals. Helmuth von Moltke wrote an essay in 1841 on the history of Franco-German conflict over Germany's western boundary.⁵ He was writing in response to the French minister Adolphe Thiers' 1840 proposal that France must gain the left bank of the Rhine. Moltke insisted that so long as France did not renounce claims on the Rhine River, she would always be a threat to Germany.⁶ As early as 1848-1850 Prussian military leaders were fearful of French military strength, especially when coupled with resurgent liberalism after the Revolution of 1848. Moltke, as head of the General Staff, developed war plans against France as early as 1857 and the actions of Napoleon III in the unification of Italy did nothing to ease Prussian fears.⁷ By the late 1860's Moltke was certain that France's ultimate motive was an attack on Germany and that a war with France was inevitable.⁸ In an 1867 speech Moltke proclaimed that all Germany wanted was to consolidate her domestic gains, but that her neighbors (France) wanted war.⁹ If France was to continue in her attempts to promote nationalism in Europe, Prussian military forces had to be prepared to defend the state and defeat any French military actions. An additional strategic worry was that the defense of the Rhenish provinces, physically separate

⁵ See Appendix A for a short biographical sketch of von Moltke.

⁶ Helmuth von Moltke, Essays, Speeches and Memoirs, Volume I, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), pp. 165-219, ~~passim~~ and editors introduction, p. 165.

⁷ Rudolf Karl von Csemmerer, The Development of Strategical Science During the 19th Century, (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd, 1905), p. 192.

⁸ Helmuth von Moltke, Essays, Speeches and Memoirs, Volume II, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), pp. 17 and 203.

⁹ Moltke, Volume II, p. 102.

from the rest of Prussia, required the defense of the small German states between the Rhine and Berlin.

The Prussian military ideal role relating to the defense of the state turned on preserving the independence of the state. Thus, Prussian ideals were primarily defensive and not expansionist. While expansion may have solved some immediate defensive problems by geographically uniting a physically disjointed Prussia, the army was more concerned with an effective defense against a French invasion. The war plans of 1857 were purely defensive and did not intend a thrust onto French soil.¹⁰ It took Bismarck and the conservative unification movement to change this ideal role to include some approval of expansion. The fact that many Prussian officers considered the war with Austria as a fratricidal preliminary to a defensive/preservationist war with France and the fact that Moltke considered Alsace a German territory suggests that the Prussian Army never accepted expansion as an ideal role prior to 1871.¹¹ As late as 1866 Moltke considered a war with Austria as "unwelcome and sinister" and wanted to concentrate on the inevitable conflict with France.¹²

Maintenance of Absolutism and the Primacy of Monarchical Rule:

The Prussian Army was royalist, acted to defend the principle of absolutism, and some military leaders believed that the defense of monarchical

¹⁰ Walter Goerlitz, History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1953), p. 82).

¹¹ Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment", in Parot, ed. Makers, p. 302; Martin Kitchen, A Military History of Germany, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 104. (Hereafter referred to as Military History).

¹² Bitter, Vol I, p. 217.

control of the military was the army's most important ideal role.¹³ The support of absolutism is intertwined with the next role of the King as *oberster Kriegsherr*, but is slightly different.

The first aspect of this role is that the king and the army believed in the principle of Divine Right. Both Frederick William IV and William I believed they had been chosen by God for their position,¹⁴ and one story has it that William I crowned himself declaring that God had chosen him.¹⁵ The belief in Divine Right supported the isolation of the army from the rest of a liberalizing society-- popular sentiment could not change what God had ordained. During the Army Reform Crisis of 1861 General Albrecht von Roon, as War Minister, warned that the army would be displeased if Frederick William IV exchanged his God given position for a popular constitution.¹⁶

In addition to the concept of Divine Right, the army leadership considered itself in a special political relationship with the crown. They had been granted their position as officers based on the right of the King to make all appointments within the state. Over the course of at least one hundred years the nobility had given up certain rights and privileges in return for a military monopoly of power.¹⁷ The rights given up by the nobility

¹³ Bitter, Vol I, p. 114.

¹⁴ Craig, *Politics*, p. 86; Kitchen, *Military History*, p. 102.

¹⁵ W. B. Hazen, *School and the Army in Germany and France*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872), p. 31.

¹⁶ Kitchen, *Military History*, p. 102.

¹⁷ Vagts, *Militarism*, pp. 47-48; This is a bit unclear. In 1860 Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia wrote an essay on the origins of the spirit of the Prussian officer. In the essay he suggests that the nobility did not receive their monopoly of military power until 1763 at the end of the Seven Years War. See Appendix 16 in Karl Demeter, *The German Officer Corps in Society and State: 1650-1945*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), p. 264. Vagts, and Demeter in other parts of his book, suggest that the process took much longer. See also my comments on the *oberster Kriegsherr* tradition, pp. 39-40.

strengthened the role of the King as supreme power in the state. Additionally, the military saw the King as the physical embodiment of the state. To serve the king was to serve the state as the two were combined in one person.¹⁸

The liberal reformers (none of whom were of noble birth) and the philosophy of political liberalism had threatened the divine role of the king, the rights of the nobility to officer the military, and the union of state and power in the person of the king. However, the success of the conservative reaction had ensured that the king would retain his monopoly on political power and the nobility their control of military power. Until 1848 the principle was kept secure, but the Revolution of 1848 again threatened the absolutist principle. To provide the state a constitution under the pressure of popular revolution would have meant the end of absolutism, even if the king had retained control of the state. Merely the approval of a constitution, no matter how few limits it imposed on the king, would have violated absolutism and the king's position. When the king defeated the revolution and granted a constitution, it was described as a writ from above, not something demanded from below.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the military leadership saw the constitution of 1848/1850 as the first step in the abrogation of the absolutist position, their position as officers, and the principle of Divine Right.²⁰ The ideal role of Defender of the Monarch and the ideal act of maintenance of absolutism required the military to attempt to modify the

¹⁸ Rothenberg, p. 297; Demeter, p. 159; Goerlitz, p. 4.

¹⁹ Vagts, Militarism, p. 187.

²⁰ Demeter, p. 159.

constitution so as to regain its position completely free from popular government and more efficiently defend the state.²¹

The King as *Oberster Kriegsherr*.

The ideal role of the king as *oberster Kriegsherr* or Supreme War Lord goes a step beyond the support of absolutism to address the professional relationship between the king and his officers. Frederick William IV said during the Revolution of 1848: Prussia "...can not be conceived of without the absolute unity of the king with his army, because any infringement of that absolute unity would be the death sentence of Prussia at home and abroad."²² Moltke believed that the military was the most important institution in Prussia and that the military made possible the existence of all other institutions.²³ This meant that the king was more a military leader than a political leader. If it were political institutions that made Prussia strong, then the king could concern himself primarily with politics and would not have to act as supreme military commander. The reformers had first recognized that it was military power that made Prussia respected in Europe and later military leaders, including the *oberster Kriegsherr*, would not allow that strength to lapse by delegating the role of supreme military command.

The relationship of the King and his officers goes back to Frederick William, The Great Elector (1620-1688) who had bound the nobility to military service. Frederick William I of Prussia (1688-1740) founded the tradition of the *oberster Kriegsherr* and the concept of the King as the

²¹ Holborn, p. 285; Moltke, Vol II, p. 48.

²² Frederick William IV, June 4, 1848 quoted in Craig, *Politics*, p. 109.

²³ Moltke quoted in Vagts, *Militarism*, p. 16.

personification of the State in exchange for officership being the sole realm of the nobility. He forced the sons of the nobility into cadet schools and the officer corps.²⁴ However, by the mid-18th Century the Prussian officer corps was again populated with commoners. Frederick the Great (1712-1786) removed the commoners and even imported foreign aristocrats in order to rebuild a purely noble officer corps. By reconstituting the officer corps, Frederick the Great reaffirmed the bond of personal unity between the noble officers and the king.²⁵

The absolute unity of *oberster Kriegsherr* and army established a requirement for loyalty and obedience to the king.²⁶ Frederick the Great demanded absolute obedience and is said to have remarked that if any of his officers started to think, they would not remain in service.²⁷ However, unthinking obedience would mean a lack of initiative which would have reduced the army's efficiency. Even in Frederick the Great's day the king was not perfectly obeyed. One cavalry commander ordered to attack Russian infantry answered, "Tell His Majesty that my head will be at his disposal after the battle, but that as long as the battle lasts I intend to use it in his service."²⁸ This tradition of selective disobedience continued until the 19th Century. Prince Karl of Prussia once told an over-zealous staff officer that the reason the king had put the officer on the staff was because he expected staff officers to know when to disobey.²⁹

²⁴ Goerlitz, pp. 2-4; Martin Kitchen, The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. xiii. (Hereafter referred to as German Officer Corps).

²⁵ Goerlitz, p. 4.

²⁶ Ritter, Vol I, p. 113.

²⁷ Goerlitz, p. 7.

²⁸ Goerlitz, p. 4.

²⁹ Goerlitz, p. 76.

The transmittal of the king's intent to officers in the field helped guide action, but could not be accomplished in every instance. In these cases, officers had to act in what they considered were the best interests of the king and the state. The special relationship of the army to the monarch allowed military leadership to act properly. As both the king and his officers were bound to the same traditions, one could expect officers to act as would the king. The military was certain that, if, due to the development of liberal government, the king lost his position as *oberster Kriegsherr*, military efficiency would decrease. There was a fear that officers and soldiers might use constitutional law to question the king's orders, and, therefore, the army would not be able to accomplish its mission.³⁰ The military had to remain separate and responsible only to the *oberster Kriegsherr*.

The *oberster Kriegsherr* was involved in a two-way relationship. The king had as much of a responsibility to his officers as they had to him. He was supposed to defend both his military role and their role as the sole military power in the state. Upon the dual nature of this ideal role turned the singular relationship of king and officer or the Aristocracy of the Sword.³¹

The Officer Code:

The officers of the Prussian Army, as the Aristocracy of the Sword, considered themselves to be a separate estate within Prussian society with their own honor, law, and beliefs. They saw their position as a special calling, and had developed a code which ensured their superiority to the rest

³⁰ Bitter, Vol I, p. 111.

³¹ Herbert Rosinski, The German Army, (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1966), p. 99.

of society, their homogeneity, and their ability to understand and execute the needs and desires of the monarch.³² The development of this officer code was a process that spanned several centuries. One historian traces the concept back to the Middle Ages and the chivalrous *Rittertum* of ancient Germany.³³ While this may be an exaggeration (the rest of the ideal roles noted above were relatively recent 17th and 18th Century innovations) the concepts of honor and character are long standing military ideals.

The maintenance of the officer code was an excellent example of support of an ideal role. The code was unwritten-- passed from officer to officer-- but a universally known element within the officer corps and the state, and something that all officers were expected to maintain. While the German officer code did not have a special name (in contrast to the Japanese *samurai* code of *Bushido*), it was a distinct ideal for the Prussian Army. The officer code contributed to "the sense of belonging to autonomous, self-perpetuating corporation...set apart from the rest of the nation, resentful of its prying eyes and distainful of its complaints..."³⁴ and ensured that essential thoughts were held in common by the military leadership.

The most important aspect of the officer code of honor was that officers should be nobility. Only the nobility had that special relationship with the king as noted in the two previous sections. In addition, only the nobility held the other aspects of the officer code such as character and honor.³⁵ Of great importance was that when the king had taken away rights from the aristocracy, he had also stripped them of important roles and jobs. In

³² Eckart Kehr, *Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 99; Craig, *Politics*, p. 79; Vagts, *Militarism*, p. 177.

³³ Demeter, p. 116. See also my FN 17.

³⁴ Demeter, p. xii.

³⁵ Demeter, p. 20.

exchange, he had promised them the sole right of military leadership. If the modern nobility were to lose the right to military leadership, they feared not only the corruption of the officer code, but also the loss of jobs and income. To allow non-nobility to compete for a limited number of positions meant that some nobility who wanted to serve would not be able to find positions. As the nobility were often trained for no other task, loss of military positions would leave them with no other income. While the army did not pay all that well, the prestige of the position was worth the financial deprivations.³⁶

Other aspects of the officer code flowed from the fact that officers were supposed to be nobility. The two most important of these aspects were the concepts of character and honor. Character is a difficult concept to isolate. It was, primarily, something that non-nobility lacked. Character was a way of life; a way of looking at the world. Perhaps the most important determinant of character was "military spirit". Military spirit included the propensity for action, training, and courage. The chief of Prussian personnel matters, Edwin von Manteuffel,* believed that the middle-classes lacked these traits.³⁷ One Prussian general included "doctors, minor officials, store-keepers, in other words, peasants who have made money -- and especially clergymen" as classes that were not fit to be officers.³⁸

Character had little to do with education and the officer code devalued intellectual capability. One of the objectives of the reformers had been to increase the educational entrance requirements for officers and Scharnhorst

³⁶ Vagts, Militarism, p. 177; Hazen, p. 154; Bitter, Vol I, p. 117.

* See Appendix A for a short biographical sketch of von Manteuffel.

³⁷ Gordon Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 114.

³⁸ Demeter, p. 21.

had demanded that every officer pass an educational test.³⁹ This proposal struck a blow at the supremacy of the nobility. The poor nobility could not afford the education that the reformers required. Manteuffel rejected the concept of education and declared that erudition was a quality not wanted in line officers.⁴⁰ In the face of poor education and the threat of loss of position, the officer corps became anti-intellectual.⁴¹ The officer code valued character over intellect: "The thing of Ultimate Effect; Is Character-not Intellect"⁴²

The officer code also included a code of honor. Honor insured that the officer would not discredit the rest of the officer corps through a lack of morals, fiscal irresponsibility, failures in character, or other indiscretions. More importantly, the concept of honor was a way of ensuring that the officer was prepared for battle.⁴³ Honor had little to do with personal beliefs, but was, during the period prior to 1871, a external honor of the warrior estate. The estate determined what the proper bounds were and when a fellow officer had breached the officer code.⁴⁴

Honor was maintained within the officer corps by individual character and, failing that, by resort to the duel. The duel, like the entire concept of honor, insured that the officer would perform his duties in battle without hesitation.⁴⁵ If an officer felt that his character or honor had been besmirched he could not allow the offender to remain unpunished. The only

³⁹ Demeter, p. 72.

⁴⁰ Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p.114.

⁴¹ Ritter, Vol I, p. 117.

⁴² Hilaire Belloc quoted in Demeter, p. x.

⁴³ Demeter, p. 113.

⁴⁴ Demeter, pp. 114-116.

⁴⁵ Demeter, p. 113.

way to prove his character and honor was to resort to the duel-- which by its act of violence replicated in times of peace the officer's duty in times of war, or was an *imago belli*.⁴⁶ By declaring himself ready to fight over his honor, the officer was stating that he had the courage to complete his wartime duty and was willing unto death to defend his honor and character. General von Loe defined the duel "not... as an act of revenge, but as a confession of faith."⁴⁷ In a role reversal, the officer who challenged another officer's honor was stating that the offender's conduct showed him unsuitable to complete his wartime duty and that the offender was lacking in the elements of the officer code.

The ritual of the duel contained an interesting paradox. If the officer who felt that his honor had been besmirched did not challenge the offender to a duel, then he was forfeiting his own honor. He was, in effect, admitting that his honor was not worth his life. If he was not willing to risk his life for his honor, he was not fit to command in battle. Additionally, if an officer failed to challenge another officer's lack of character or military spirit, then he was also besmirching his own honor. He was allowing the officer code to be broken, because he was not willing to risk his life to defend the honor of the officer corps.⁴⁸ (Interestingly, the concept of honor and the use of the duel were common to the Prussian, Russian, and French armies during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The existence of Republican governments did not keep French officers from maintaining their concept of honor.)

⁴⁶ Vagts, *Militarism*, p. 177.

⁴⁷ Kitchen, *German Officer Corps*, p. 50.

⁴⁸ Demeter, pp. 129 and 138.

The traits of nobility, character, military spirit, and honor, when combined with the relationship of the officer to the Supreme War Lord were intended to separate the military from the rest of society as well as insure the superiority of the army to the general population.

The Military as a Separate State and Aloof from Politics:

The existence of a special officer code, the permitting of dueling in the officer corps when it was prohibited in civilian life, the exclusiveness of the nobility, and the special relationship between king and army all point to the fact that the army was a state within the state. The army, with its special mission and relationship with the monarch, was determined to maintain a separate position within (or existing alongside) Prussian society. While the officer code did not specifically include common soldiers, the military also wanted to keep them separate. This concept of the soldier being separate from society went back to the time of Frederick the Great and continued through the 19th Century.⁴⁹ William I wanted to remove the soldier completely from society and so indoctrinate him that he would see himself as completely different from society. In effect, William I wanted a royal army.⁵⁰ Moltke believed that "the military are not wards of the State nor are they citizens. They have a separate existence."⁵¹ During the Revolution of 1848 von Roon wrote: "The army is our fatherland, for there alone have the unclean and violent elements who put everything into turmoil failed to penetrate."⁵² At this point in the revolution, when the king

⁴⁹ Ritter, Vol I, p. 113.

⁵⁰ Ritter, Vol I, p. 108.

⁵¹ Moltke, Vol II, p. 55.

⁵² Craig, Politics, p. 107

was apparently on the side of the people, von Roon considered the army separate from even the king. While the king may have redeemed himself, the feeling of separation from society continued.

In addition to this role as a state within the state with special privileges, relationships, and duties, the military saw itself as being aloof from politics. The military considered its relationship with the king as the only proper form for the state. If they already had the only proper form of government, there was no need for internal politics. To allow the military to become involved in politics was to acknowledge that there was a legitimate challenge to the state and to run the risk of the military becoming infected with liberal ideas.⁵³ In a speech to the *Landtag* Moltke expressed a fear that allowing the army to vote would impair discipline.⁵⁴ While in that speech he was speaking specifically of the *Landwehr* during mobilization, his views also applied to the active army.

This aloofness from politics was binding on all officers no matter what their position. Even when holding government positions, officers remained servants of the king and not responsible to any form of popular government. The sole exception, after the granting of the constitution in 1848, was the War Minister. However, the War Minister was still an officer and retained loyalty to the king. Von Roon declared that his oath to the king, who granted the constitution, was superior to his oath to the constitution. The War Minister was not involved in politics; he was presenting the king's wishes. Moltke expressed this same opinion. Although he had been elected to

⁵³ Vagts, *Militarism*, p. 200.

⁵⁴ Moltke, Vol II, p. 52.

parliament he insisted that he remained aloof from politics. He was not a politician, but was providing military advice to the popular body.⁵⁵

Of course, this is all a relatively narrow definition of politics, and the military had a strangely myopic view of its role in politics. Simply by defending absolutism, the army was involved in politics. To Manteuffel, aloofness from politics was never taking commands from civilian ministers. Von Roon objected to the use of the military as a "lancet for the diplomatic surgeon." He insisted that the army had interests and opinions.⁵⁶ Each of these statements implies some involvement in politics. In addition, the military definition of aloofness from politics does not acknowledge that the act of battle is an involvement in international politics to an extreme degree.

Despite these exceptions, we can say with some certainty that the majority of the army's officers and soldiers were aloof from politics. The discipline of service ensured that the political opinions of the officer corps were more important than any beliefs held by the ranks. The officers themselves, molded into homogeneity by the officer code, supported the monarchical system and did not get involved in domestic politics.⁵⁷ As in the case of the other ideal roles and acts discussed above, the translation of an ideal aloofness to reality will be discussed in the next chapter.

These three ideal roles and five sets of ideal acts are not necessarily all the ideal roles and acts the Prussian military had prior to 1871. However, they form the framework for the goals and missions the military expected to accomplish. The next chapter will explore how these ideal roles appeared in

⁵⁵ Moltke, Vol II, p. 96.

⁵⁶ Craig, Politics, pp. 152 and 191.

⁵⁷ See Demeter, p. 165; Ritter, Vol I, p. 112.

the actual operation of the military, as well as how other acts, completely separate from these ideals, were demanded of the army.

CHAPTER 4: REAL ROLES FOR THE PRUSSIAN ARMY BEFORE 1871

Talent and genius operate outside the rules, and
theory conflicts with reality.

von Clausewitz

...und der König absolut, wenn er unsern Willen
tut.¹

The period from 1815 to 1870 was a rollercoaster of reform, reaction, and change. Prussia evolved from being a European military power to the leader of an Empire incorporating all the German states except Austria. This evolution was, in large part, the result of the Prussian Army's success in executing its real roles. This chapter will explore the real roles of the Prussian Army in the period leading to unification. In other words, how the army's ideal roles were translated into actual activities.

Throughout this chapter reference will be made to the Army Reforms of 1860. Perhaps it is best to explain these reforms now rather than

¹ Clausewitz, p. 140; Alfred Vagts, The Military Attache, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 279, roughly translates to "The king is absolute, when he does what we want."

incorporating pieces of explanation into the rest of the chapter. The reform was the result of a study completed by von Roon in 1859. King William I, concerned with military deficiencies noted in the mobilizations of 1850 and 1859, directed von Roon to develop a method of correcting those deficiencies. William charged von Roon to stay in the purely military realm; to restrict his search to ways of improving military efficiency.² Von Roon's proposals concentrated on the term of service for soldiers. Prussia already had universal military obligation. Based on the *Landwehrordnung* of 1814 all male citizens were liable for a period of 3 years service. After the 3 years of active service the soldiers served 2 years in the reserves, followed by a transfer to the *Landwehr* for an additional 6 years in the first levy and 6 years in the second levy. The soldiers were identified by age groups or classes. Active duty was 20-23; Reserves 24-25; *Landwehr* first levy 26-32; *Landwehr* second levy 33-39. By 1848 the active term of service had been reduced to 2 years, but was returned to 3 years in 1856.

The state, as its population exploded, did not call up as many males as required for active service. This meant that while large numbers of males never served, those in the *Landwehr* could be called up well after they had established families and occupations. For example: during the mobilization of 1859 some 150,000 youths escaped service while 55,000 married men were called up.³ In addition, the average age of the total army increased while large numbers of young men were untrained.

Landwehr units were associated with line regiments and were to link up with the line units during mobilization. Because *Landwehr* officers and

² Craig, *Politics*, p. 143.

³ Rosinski, 82.

soldiers had been in active service, the active, reserve, and *Landwehr* units supposedly had similar training and capabilities. In reality this was not so. The most glaring difference was the quality of officers. Many *Landwehr* senior officers were bourgeois who had been forced out of active service after the Napoleonic Wars. Others were *Einjährig*, or middle class officers who had evaded the full three year term of active service. Candidates who had high levels of education and could pay their own expenses, served as officers for one year (thus the name). After that one year they were transferred to the *Landwehr*. This system was initially acceptable to both the middle class and the army. The army got a plethora of junior officers at low cost, while the *Einjährig* completed military service and could return to a more profitable profession. However, the mobilizations of 1850 and 1859 revealed a lack of experience among the *Landwehr* officers and showed that the army could not compete with other European armies until there was more parity of experience between the active and *Landwehr* forces.⁴

Von Roon's reforms intended to remedy this problem and increase the efficiency of the total army. The Army Bill of 1860 proposed to return the active term of service to 3 years. In addition, the role of the first reserve was to be increased and that of the *Landwehr* decreased. Soldiers would serve 3 years in the line, 5 years in the reserve, and 11 years in the *Landwehr*. Simultaneously, the size of the line army was almost doubled, more men were to be called up each year, and reserve and line units were linked, with the reserve units having professional officers. The *Landwehr* was reduced to accomplishing garrison or fortress defense within the

⁴ Bosinski, p. 79.

homeland and had no offensive weapons.⁵ The intent was to increase the size of the active army and the first reserves while increasing the efficiency of the reserve units. The *Landwehr* would simply provide a force of final resort.

The Reform Bill was unacceptable to the *Landtag*, not as much because it increased costs, but because they saw it as an attempt to remove all liberal thought from the military and reduce the role of middle-class officers. The liberals were attached to the romantic notion of an effective *Landwehr* that saved Prussia from Napoleon. The *Landtag's* opposition to the reforms instigated the constitutional crisis that continued until the Indemnity Act of 1866.

Defense and Expansion:

In the previous chapter we contended that defense and not expansion of the state was an ideal role of the Prussian military. Yet, by 1871 Germany was united under Prussian direction and primarily by means of Prussian arms. Defense of the state and maintaining the state's international prestige remained the ideal for the Prussian Army until 1865. The war with Austria was forced on the army and the war with France was the outcome of years of preparation and expectation, not the result of a change to expansionism. The question here is, how did the Prussian military actually defend the state?

The letters and plans of von Moltke make it clear that plans for the physical defense of Prussia were aimed at only one country--France. Prussia was at peace from 1815 to 1864, but there was constant fear over the threat

⁵ Craig, Politics, p. 145.

from an increasingly strong France. On the Eastern front, the Prussians remained bound in friendship with the Russians, comforted with a conservative understanding and few points of contention. Occasional tensions might require thoughts of defense in the East, but attention remained focused in the West. Assistance given Russia during the Polish Insurrection of 1830 was a guarantor of friendship through the Crimean War and the two countries were generally on good terms until 1875.⁶

During the French July Revolution of 1830 the Prussian Army mobilized on the Western frontier in anticipation of French aggression. This was the beginning of the *Wacht am Rhein* and saw the establishment of border fortresses.⁷ Despite these early preparations, the period from 1848-1870 is best documented and is illustrative of the military preparation directed against France. In 1850 the Treaty of Olmütz formalized Austrian political supremacy over Prussia. While the government may have feared to face the combined wrath of Austria and Russia, it appears that the military leadership of Prussia wanted the treaty in order to forestall any fratricidal conflict between Germans.⁸ The treaty was negotiated by Otto von Manteuffel who was interested in maintaining the friendship of the conservative courts. Despite the fact that Russia sided with Austria, even the Tsar did not want to fight Prussia and the special military plenipotentiaries at St. Petersburg managed to maintain a sense of calm in the Russian court.⁹ Manteuffel and the rest of the military leadership had a

⁶ Vagts, Military Attaché, p. 281.

⁷ Goerlitz, p. 65.

⁸ Rothenberg, p. 302.

⁹ Vagts, Military Attaché, pp. 283-284.

much greater fear of France than they did of Austria, both ideologically and militarily, and acted to ensure that France had no opening for an attack.

After 1850 the Prussians continued to plan a future war against France. During the drawn out diplomatic negotiations prior to and during the Crimean War, Prussia remained neutral. There may have been several reasons for this neutrality, but the military was primarily concerned with an attack across the Rhine. If the Prussians allied with Austria, then they were supporting the French, an ideological impossibility. If they aligned with the Russians, there was the distinct possibility that France would attack Prussia. The military leadership knew that from France's strategic viewpoint Prussia and the German states were a much easier target than the Crimea.¹⁰ The courts of Southern Germany were especially fearful of a French attack from Alsace and opposed any German Confederation involvement in the war.¹¹ Despite the April, 1854 treaty signed with Austria, Prussia played the middle road and never had to act on the terms of the alliance. Bismarck even suggested placing 66,000 men in Northern Silesia so they could cross to either the Russian or the Austrian frontiers and control events through superior arms.¹²

After 1857, when Helmuth von Moltke became head of the General Staff, war plans were all directed against France and the earliest war plans were clearly not expansionist. Plans made in 1857 were purely defensive in anticipation of a French attack on the Rhine and did not allow Prussian

¹⁰ Helmuth von Moltke, Field Marshal Count Helmuth von Moltke a Correspondent, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), p. 213.

¹¹ Otto von Bismarck, Bismarck, The Man and The Statesman, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1898), p. 107.

¹² Bismarck, p. 106.

forces to cross the frontier in pursuit.¹³ The War of 1859 further heightened fears of a French attack and led to Prussian mobilization along the Rhine. Many Prussian officers hoped that France would attack before Austria surrendered.¹⁴ The shortcomings of the Prussian army and problems noted during the mobilization caused William I to explore methods of improving the army so that it could better meet the threat from France. Meanwhile, the French army was growing and had battle experience from the wars in Italy. It was also feared that the French had a growing appetite for the left bank of the Rhine.¹⁵

The wars with Denmark over the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein led to an expansion of the Prussian state, but they did not reflect a change to expansionist goals on the part of the army. First, the wars were part of a Bismarckian ploy to divert attention from domestic politics. While Bismarck could not persuade the *Landtag* to accept the Army Reform Bill, he knew he could persuade them if the army was successful in action and was used to affect German unification. However, even at this point Moltke was not expansionist. In regards to France, Moltke had written that he wanted to recoup the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. He did not see this desire as expansionism, but as a legitimate demand for the return of German lands.¹⁶ Similarly, in the question of Schleswig and Holstein, he knew that Prussia needed the duchies for strategic defense. However, Moltke was willing to cede Austria other land, even Prussian land, in order to ensure that no conflicts developed between the two German states over

¹³ Goerlitz, p. 82.

¹⁴ Goerlitz, p. 82.

¹⁵ Goerlitz, p. 83.

¹⁶ Moltke, Vol II, pp. 18, 192.

compensation.¹⁷ Thus, the demand for German lands was also directed primarily against the archenemy, France.

It was not until 1865 that Moltke and the General Staff began to plan for a war with Austria. This change occurred when Moltke realized that Prussian strategic needs demanded that Austria not have a military base in the duchies.¹⁸ Even then the Prussians recognized that France was the greater threat and expected that if France attacked, Austria would join Prussia to defeat the intruder. However, the Seven Weeks War had little to do with the role of defending the state. Bismarck instigated the conflict in order to unify Germany under Prussian control. The military did what was expected of it and quickly dispatched Austria.

By 1870 the military leadership knew that they had to deal with France and, in the end, Prussia had her long-expected war with France. But, even then, if we remember the views of Moltke, the taking of Alsace and Lorraine was not expansion, but reunification of lost provinces. The hereditary enemy was getting too strong and might be able to defeat the Prussians and destroy newly unified North Germany. The French were a real threat to the Prussian state and the new confederation. Provoked by Bismarck or not, the Franco-Prussian War was the army's first real chance to meet the ideal role of defending the state with arms since 1815.

If the army was not at war and physically defending the state during the long peace from 1815-1864, what was it doing? It was defending the ideology of conservatism against domestic and foreign forces. The military

¹⁷ Martin Kitchen, A Military History of Germany, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 115.

¹⁸ Kitchen, Military History, p. 115.

became a police force to ensure internal tranquility and was aimed primarily against liberals and the working classes. This ideological defense took many forms and we will note both domestic and international actions taken to ideologically defend the state.

In the 1820's the reaction against reform was generally internal to the military. Commoners were forced out of the officer corps, education requirements were restricted, and the careers of liberal were slowed. Frederick William IV returned to a very conservative, absolutist position. However, as early as 1826 the army was described as a "factor of order" in Prussian society and during the 1830's and 1840's the army was repeatedly used to crush internal unrest and rebellion. In 1847 the military was used to crush the Silesian weavers rebellion and to suppress a revolt in Berlin and by 1848 the working classes hated the military as a tool of repression.¹⁹ The Revolution of 1848 was an attempt to bring liberal government to Prussia and to restrict the use of the army as a tool of the government. Just like the reformers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the liberals of 1848 wanted a people's army that would be used only in defense of the land and not for internal police actions.

Despite what appeared to be indecisiveness, the army acted firmly to defeat the Revolution. Although the army evacuated Berlin, the leadership never failed to support the conservative cause and encouraged Frederick William IV to fight the liberals. The army fought in the streets of Berlin before it was ordered to evacuate and the leadership later made plans to reenter and clear the city. When the king was finally convinced to defeat the rebellion, he ordered the army to retake Berlin. The military acted with

¹⁹ Craig, Politics, pp. 81-91, *passim*.

alacrity and the Revolution of 1848 ended within days of the order to move back into the city.

The internal use of the army did not change after the failed revolution and from 1848 until 1858 the army was again employed as a police force. In fact, the military leadership, certain of the imminent revival of domestic revolutionary activity, opposed any use of the military outside the borders of Prussia. This fear helps to explain the capitulation to Austria at Olmütz in 1850 and neutrality during the Crimean War.²⁰ In 1851 the army's police powers were strengthened when "The Law on the State of Siege" gave military commanders the authority to suspend constitutional rights and impose martial law.²¹

The army also acted in ideological defense of the state in international affairs. In conjunction with the primary physical goal, the ideological defense of the state was also keyed against France. French inspired liberalism was anathema to the leaders of the Prussian Army. During the War of 1859 between Austria and the Italian/French coalition, the army wanted the king to support the Austrians because it feared the spread of liberal and national ideas from France and wanted to assist Austria in defeating the French and Italians.²² Unfortunately for the desires of the military leadership, the war ended too soon. Although the Prussians mobilized, France would not attack into German territories.

The Prussian Army had hoped that the defeat of France would not only protect the security of the state, but would also defeat liberalism in Germany. The absolutist alliance of Prussia, Austria, and Russia contained

²⁰ Craig Politics, p. 83.

²¹ Kitchen, Military History, p. 90.

²² Kitchen, Military History, p. 104.

military strength equal to the potential power of French arms; however, the comfort of the conservative alliance had been shaken during 1848. Prussian leaders realized that military power alone would not guarantee the ideological defense of the Prussian state and a sustained surge in popular liberal sentiment would threaten the structure of the state. The only possible ideological defense was to oppose the national unification of Germany.²³

Prior to 1866 the army opposed German unification for several reasons. First, unification would draw Prussia into conflict with Austria over control of unified Germany. Conflict within the conservative bloc of Central Europe held the real prospect of French military aggression. Second, and more importantly, unification was a liberal cause and threatened to establish popular control of the state and the army. Popular control of Germany, or a liberal unified Germany with popular government, would mean the end of Prussia.²⁴ Finally, unification under liberal auspices promised the submergence of Prussia inside Germany and the loss of Prussian prestige, custom, and independence.

The army combated liberal unification in several active ways. LtCol Karl von Griesheim, attached to the War Ministry, produced several counterrevolutionary pamphlets. The intent of one pamphlet published during the height of the Revolution of 1848 is made clear by its title: "Only Soldiers Help Against Democrats." Another pamphlet, "The German Central Power and the Prussian Army" was an appeal for Prussian rather than

²³ Kitchen, Military History, p. 92.

²⁴ Craig, Politics, p. 132.

German nationalism and scorned any Prussian soldier who would allow himself to be merged into a greater German army.²⁵

Another way the army opposed unification was to support (or even demand) subordination to Austria and its actions led to the signing the Treaty of Olmütz. The treaty was the result of Russian and Austrian displeasure with Joseph von Radowitz's politically liberal 1849-50 unification plan which excluded Austria. In the resulting confrontation, the army supported the Austrian position against the wishes of the Prussian government and Frederick William IV. The army was not ready to lead a war against fellow conservatives, be it Austria or Russia, who was supporting the Austrian position. While the army claimed that it was not capable of defeating Austria, ideological considerations were more important. The military probably overstated the strength of the Austrian army in order to influence the king to back down. Bismarck remembered that the army said the Austrians had 80,000- 100,000 men on the frontier while more disinterested minds put the number at under 30,000.²⁶ To accept the plan was to be defeated by liberal, democratic forces. In the mobilization that occurred, officers deliberately delayed the readying of the troops.²⁷ While the treaty placed Prussia in a secondary political role to Austria, it also insured the supremacy of conservatism in Germany. Bismarck noted that Prussia's honor was maintained "...in Prussian abstinence before all things from every shameful union with democracy."²⁸ The army could not accept loss of its traditions within a greater Germany,

²⁵ Craig, Politics, p. 113; Kitchen, Military History, p. 80.

²⁶ Bismarck, p. 72.

²⁷ Kitchen, Military History, pp. 90-93; Craig, Politics, p. 133.

²⁸ Bismarck, p. 80.

but it could accept subordination to conservative Austria as certified at Olmütz.

Once Bismarck coopted nationalism as a conservative movement, the Prussian Army dropped its opposition to unification. The army realized that unification under Bismarck would create a Prusso-Germany where conservative ideas would be upheld and Prussian military traditions would be supreme. However, the army still had little empathy with Bismarck's foreign agenda and it was reluctant to battle conservative Austria. The army saw Austria and Russia as natural ideological allies. This was another reason for neutrality during the Crimean War.²⁹ The army did not want to offend either conservative neighbor while simultaneously inviting French aggression.

During most of the period from 1815-1871 the Prussian Army was not involved in physical defense of the state. Instead, it acted as the police force which insured the suppression of liberalism at home and in the rest of Germany. It was not until the Prussian Army realized that it would not lose its place in the state that it supported unification. In other words, not only was the army active daily in combating liberal ideas (police actions, war with France, support of treaties with Austria) it were also defending its own position in the state.

Defense of Absolutism:

The defense of ideology was related to the defense and support of absolutism. To oppose liberal ideas was not necessarily to support absolutism, but in this case the acts were similar. The army could not allow

²⁹ Craig, Politics, pp. 161, 167.

any force in the state to restrict the powers of the king. While some of the Napoleonic era reformers had wanted constitutionalism, they had not made any headway. Again, the key elements of this story begin in the Revolution of 1848. In February 1847 Frederick William IV had issued a patent allowing a united *Landtag* with extremely limited powers. The king made clear that this body was merely advisory and would not meet often, but the army was worried by this act. By June 1848, in an interesting shift in positions, the army was worried about the king's political reliability.

Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia described the army of 1848 as "more royalist than the king" and this strange political phenomenon was revealed in the way the army reacted to the Revolution of 1848.³⁰ During the uprising in Berlin the army fired on the crowds and tried to clear the streets of the city, but it was unprepared for the task. After Frederick William IV ordered the troops out of the city, he took too much time in deciding what to do and was eventually trapped in Berlin at the mercy of the mobs. Frederick William agreed to make concessions to the people which included the permanent removal of soldiers from the city, establishment of a people's police and guard force, the *Bürgerwehr*, and the granting of a constitution. The removal of the army from the city was only a temporary reversal to the officers; however, the replacement of the soldiers with the *Bürgerwehr* was an insult, and a constitution would destroy the fabric of the society and government the military was defending. While leaders of the army had suggested removing the troops until they could prepare a better plan, they had not expected the king to stay in the city. Now the king was separated

³⁰ Prince Frederick Charles in Demeter, p. 260.

from the troops and, as Gordon Craig puts it, "The chief fear of the soldiers was that the king might fail them."³¹

The army thought the absolutist realm was disintegrating. In Berlin the king seemed powerless. He rode through the streets with a liberal cocade on his hat and acted as if in complete accord with the people. On 25 March, 1848 Frederick William IV traveled to Potsdam to speak to his officers. He thanked them for protecting him earlier and then told them that he felt as safe, if not safer, with the *Bürgerwehr* protecting him as he had when the soldiers were in the city. This was too much for the officers to bear and the army let its feelings be known. Bismarck described the scene as the officers angrily rattled their sabres in response to the King's remarks.³² At this point the senior leadership began to push the king to allow them to retake the city and end the revolution.

While being replaced in the city by the *Bürgerwehr* was a humiliation for the officers, the prospect of a constitution was absolutely unacceptable. First, the king would be giving up all claims of absolutism and divine right. Second, they feared that they would become subservient to a popularly elected government. Finally, and most important, they feared that the king would capitulate to the revolution's primary demand of making the army swear an oath of loyalty to the constitution. Each of these conditions would destroy the absolutist state that they were sworn to uphold and the officer's special relationship with the crown. Their concept of the king as the physical embodiment of the state would not allow the senior leadership to accept a constitution or any reduction of the king's (or their own) position.

³¹ Craig, *Politics*, p. 94.

³² Bismarck, p. 29.

In a bid to prevent the granting of a constitution, plans were made for a *coup* and the rescue of the king from the city.³³ However, the plan was never carried out because Frederick William IV was not as weak as the army thought. The orders to remove the troops protecting the king may have been the result of confusion and poor communications (Bismarck contends that Frederick William IV never ordered the removal of the troops as he was at that time answering "a call of nature."³⁴). While that may just be an amusing story, it is certain that the king had never allowed his promises of reform to be written down and made official. Fortunately, from the army's point of view, the committee drafting a constitution took too long. Frederick William, heartened by the news of military suppression of the revolution in Austria, resolved to forcefully end the Revolution in Prussia. He ordered the army back into Berlin and the revolution simply disappeared. When the Frankfurt Parliament offered Frederick William the crown of a united Germany, the king refused to accept a crown from the streets. The revolution ended in large part due to the opposition of those military leaders closest to the king.³⁵

Later in 1848 Frederick William granted a constitution. However, that constitution, and the revision promulgated in 1850, did not reduce the king's absolute power of command over the army. The popular house was primarily an advisory body. They did have control over the budget, but they could only approve legislation presented by the government. According to Article 46 the king retained absolute command over the army and under Article 108 the army continued to make its oath of loyalty to the

³³ Kitchen, Military History, p. 76; Prince Frederick Charles in Demeter, p. 259.

³⁴ Bismarck, p. 34.

³⁵ Roewinski, p. 82.

person of the king and not to the constitution. There was a War Ministry responsible to the *Landtag*, and around that office swirled much of the army's political activity for the next twenty years. (See below, pages 88-89) Nevertheless, even some parliamentary control over the budget meant the end to absolutism, and, therefore, the army was against the constitution.

During the constitutional crisis over the army reforms (1862-1866), military leaders made a bid for the end of the constitution and a return to absolutism. However, during this same period a rift opened within the senior military leadership. Manteuffel retained the royalist stance he held during the Revolution and suggested that the constitutional crisis be used as an excuse to return to absolutism.³⁶ Meanwhile, it was during the constitutional crisis that von Roon finally decided that some compromise would be required. While he remained a monarchist, von Roon was willing to allow a constitutional monarchy if only to end the stalemate between crown and parliament. This was in keeping with William I's stated intent of working within the legal framework of Frederick William IV's constitution.³⁷ Bismarck and von Roon finally managed to have Manteuffel cashiered after he had interfered with several attempts at compromise which would have ended the crisis. Bismarck was angry because Manteuffel was paralyzing the entire state, and Roon was angry because Manteuffel, his technical subordinate, was disobeying his instructions.³⁸ The constitutional crisis was temporarily resolved when Bismarck ignored the *Landtag* and developed his theory that the military could continue to operate without a *Landtag* approved budget.

³⁶ Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p. 100.

³⁷ Ritter, Vol I, p. 114.

³⁸ Craig, Politics, p. 173; Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p. 111.

Despite the conservative nature of the constitution from above (when contrasted with liberal demands for soldier councils, elected officers, and the abolition of saluting), the army felt that it was losing the battle in defense of absolutism. The constitution continued to be seen as an unwarranted restriction of royal prerogative.³⁹ Their only consolation was that the king had granted the constitution on his own terms and not based on the demands of rebels. In addition to the fact that the constitution was a writ from above, the army was somewhat placated because they remained bound by oath to the king and not to the whims of a liberal government.

Obedience to the *Oberster Kriegsherr*

The ideal concept of the king as Supreme War Lord suggests a view of the monarch as a perfect soldier. However, by 1848 this view was no longer held by the Prussian Army. The army's fear that Frederick William might fail it was bolstered by the king's unsoldierly bearing, his mistakes during maneuvers, and, even worse, the jokes he made about himself on maneuvers.⁴⁰ The army's professional judgement was that the king was "unsoldierly". This judgement acted to degrade the bond of absolute obedience that was part of the agreement between king and nobility. Part of the complaint of the liberals about the army during 1848 was that the army indoctrinated the soldiers until they achieved *Kadavergehorsam* or cadaver-like obedience. Clearly, this training did not translate to the officer corps. As noted above, when the officers disapproved of the King's actions during the revolution, they let him know, and, against his wishes, went so far as to

³⁹ Kitchen, German Officer Corps, p. xvi.

⁴⁰ Craig, p. 94.

plan a *coup*. This was not an isolated case, but a pattern of disobedience; the officer caste thought that it knew better than the *oberster Kriegsherr* how to act. The officers excused this act of disobedience by explaining that a coup was legal, so long as the king did not directly oppose it⁴¹ but other acts were not explained so glibly.

The failure to obey the orders or policy of the *oberster Kriegsherr* is related to the military's struggle against the supremacy of political policy over military action. Once the king as Supreme Warlord and political leader directed the army to act according to state policy, the army was ideally obliged to subordinate itself to policy. The opposite occurred. Acts of disobedience in peace against the person of the king escalated to acts of disobedience in wartime against both the orders of the king and the wishes of civilian policymakers. Before listing some of the more obvious acts of disobedience and their implications, we should first note that when the king formally weighed against the army with direct orders, the army generally obeyed. This was not an army out of control, but one that felt its professionalism threatened or challenged by what they considered to be bad strategy or national policy. The rub is that relatively minor acts of disobedience could have significant international repercussions never even considered in the realm of the purely military.

Between 1848 and 1871 the army consistently disobeyed the orders of the king. As noted before, during the Revolution of 1848, when Frederick William IV wanted a peaceful conclusion, the army fired on crowds in Berlin and planned for a coup. While this act affected domestic affairs, the army did not limit its disobedience to acts within the state. During the

⁴¹ Goerlitz, p. 80.

Mobilization of 1850 prior to the signing of the Treaty of Olmütz, officers sabotaged efforts to prepare the state for war because they disapproved of the policy of king and diplomats. While Prussian kings apparently believed that the military should be subordinate to policy, the generals did not. They saw the policymakers as creating situations from which only the soldiers could save the state. As von Moltke wrote, "Our diplomats plunge us forever into misfortune; our generals always save us."⁴² In addition to the Mobilization of 1850, the army disobeyed king and policy in every war from 1864 to 1871.

During the wars with Denmark Field Marshal Wrangel deliberately disobeyed orders and later delayed in relaying orders to his commanders. In January 1864 Prussia was not sure of Austrian support in a full scale war against Denmark. When the Prussians attacked, the Danes refused battle and retreated into a fortified position. The army wanted to execute warplans that called for a maneuver through Jutland which would isolate the Danish forces. However, this would violate the previous agreements made with Austria by extending the war beyond the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Wrangel was ordered to remain in Schleswig until negotiations could be completed. The Field Marshal did not believe that the advance should be halted and, oblivious to the fact that Manteuffel was engaged in careful negotiations with the Austrians, Wrangel allowed his forces to maneuver into Jutland and threaten to outflank the Danish forces. Later in the same campaign, after the king had sent Wrangel clear orders not to move, the Field Marshal failed to relay orders to the field commanders. One

⁴² Moltke quoted in Craig, Politics, p. 90.

of his subordinates again pressed the attack.⁴³ These military acts of disobedience threatened the negotiations and could have escalated a German war into a European war.

Acts of disobedience were not always those of commission. During the same war Bismarck needed to prove the worth of the reformed Prussian Army. As the army had not been battle tested since 1815 it did not have a reputation or prestige which Bismarck could use as a bargaining chip. The Polish Insurrection of 1830, the apparent ineffectiveness during 1848, and blunders and shortcomings during the mobilization in 1859 all militated against the Prussian army. Prussia desperately needed a military victory for use in diplomatic negotiations and, to gain it, Bismarck and the king ordered the army to attack the Danish fortified position of the Düppel. Prince Frederick Charles, commander of the forces before the Düppel, objected saying that they could move into Jutland and outflank the position without a battle. The military leadership objected that in a frontal attack on a fortified position, the Prussian army would lose the technical superiority they held over the Danes. Breech loading needle guns were as ineffective as muskets against the fortifications of the Düppel. Thinking only of the purely military, the army leadership could not understand making an attack that did not fulfill military necessity. Finally, the king sent von Moltke, the unknown Chief of the General Staff, to Denmark to plan the attack and prod along the commanders. After weeks of delay, the army stormed the Düppel and astounded Europe with its tactics, bravery, and discipline under fire.⁴⁴ Following that great victory the other Great Powers, who had been

⁴³ Craig, Politics, pp. 184-6.

⁴⁴ Craig, Politics, pp. 188-190.

considering intervention, were reluctant to join the fray and the Danish capitulated. The prestige gained in that single action would make other nations reluctant to face Prussia for the rest of the century. In addition, that single action gave the Prussian Army a sense of achievement that had been absent since 1815. These positive political and spiritual achievements were out of proportion to the purely military act of taking one position. The Prussian military commanders eventually understood the positive effect of storming the Düppel, but not until well after they had delayed their king's policy and threatened the security of the state.

During the 1866 war with Austria, the army was again in conflict with the political leadership of the state. This time, William was temporarily aligned against the politicians, but Bismarck was able to convince the king that peace had to be concluded after Sadowa and without capturing Vienna. Both king and army were carried away with the ease of their victory and wished to humiliate the Austrians by taking the capital. Only Bismarck understood the political needs of the state and realized that Austria would be required as an ally in the future. More immediately, he realized that carrying on the battle could bring the French into the war. The sudden creation of a unified Germany on his eastern frontier shocked Napoleon III and he was apparently willing to go to war in order to save Austria and the balance of small sovereign states in Germany.⁴⁵ Bismarck was able to convince the king to stop the drive on Vienna and conclude the peace. The other military men were harder to convince. Their disappointment with the

⁴⁵ Heinrich Friedjung, The Struggle for Supremacy in Germany, 1859-1866, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966) [First published in 1897 as Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland, 1859 bis 1866], pp. 240-242.

king and dislike for the sudden role of politics in warfare led them to attempt to exclude the politicians in the next war.

During the Franco-Prussian War, the military again disobeyed king and politicians. William I was, by 1870, in complete support of the primacy of politics. Moltke and the army demanded freedom to act unencumbered once the war started and they excluded Bismarck from planning sessions, briefings, and daily reports. Despite orders from William to include the Chancellor, Bismarck finally had to complain that most of the information about the conduct of the war was "in most cases new to me when I read it five days later in the newspapers."⁴⁶ When the king directed the army to include Bismarck, it was done reluctantly and intermittently. The army again argued over specific operations directed by the king and Bismarck. The most obvious case was the argument over the bombardment of Paris. Bismarck wanted to besiege the city and force the government into negotiations while the army wanted to bypass Paris. While Bismarck was engaged in negotiations for surrender, the army wanted to move south, destroy the armies of France and force her to surrender. Moltke saw Paris as another Sebastopol and refused to attempt to storm the city.⁴⁷ Moltke wrote on 3 November, 1870: "The present negotiations with M. Thiers cannot lead to any result. These haughty, infatuated Frenchmen must be humiliated before they will listen to reason."⁴⁸ Moltke wanted to bleed France to death.⁴⁹ The only point of agreement between Bismarck and the army was that they both wanted to destroy the revolutionary government

⁴⁶ Bismarck quoted in Craig, Politics, p. 205.

⁴⁷ Craig, p. 212; Kitchen, German Officer Corps, p. xx.

⁴⁸ Moltke, Correspondent, p. 237. The sentiment is echoed in a Oct. 1870 letter, p. 250.

⁴⁹ Goerlitz, p. 92.

that had sprung up in Paris after the capture of Napoleon III. In an extension of the ideological war, the army would not allow a 'red republic' to rule France.⁵⁰ On the issue of bombardment, the king weighed in favor of Bismarck. Moltke was furious and threatened to resign, but eventually capitulated and ordered that the siege guns be brought forward.

In a more blatant act of disobedience towards the *oberster Kriegsherr* himself, the army sabotaged an early attempt to bring the war to a conclusion. Bismarck was in negotiations with Maréchal Bazaine, whose army was besieged in Metz, to place his forces in support of Napoleon III in order to overthrow the revolutionary republic. A French general, Bourbaki, was given free passage by the king. He was to travel to London, consult with the Empress, and return to Metz. On his return to France, the French general was captured by Prussian troops and Prince Frederick Charles refused to allow him to reenter the fortress. Eventually, Bourbaki, faced with apparent Prussian duplicity, changed his mind. When released he fled to the French forces still free in the provinces. This one act of disobedience, by a royal prince, may well have continued the war for months. All Bismarck could do was write to the Crown Prince and complain: "How can I have the courage to proceed with my work if I cannot count on royal orders ... being faithfully executed?"⁵¹

The preceeding examples reveal aspects of the daily personality of the Prussian army in stark contrast with their ideal role of supporter of the king. Other acts of disobedience will be discussed later as will the army's actions in politics. The army was not purely obedient to their *oberster Kriegsherr*,

⁵⁰ Kitchen, A Military History, p. 127.

⁵¹ Craig, Politics, pp. 207-08; Bismarck quoted in Craig, Politics, pp. 208-09.

but considered their military professionalism superior to that of the king. The army were often more royalist, more aggressive than their theoretical supreme commander.

The Officer Code in Daily Life:

Just as the officer corps did not perfectly obey the king, so the officer code did not translate perfectly into real life. The demography of the officer corps changed between 1815 and 1871 belying the belief that the nobility had sole claim on the officer estate. Demands placed on the army by increases in size and modern technology forced changes in officer education, background, and homogeneity. To the old nobility these changes could have completely altered the role of the officer corps. The daily activities of the military leadership were attempts to maintain the officer code and the character of the officer corps.

The noble makeup of the officer corps had been threatened during the Napoleonic Wars. Frederick the Great had purged the officer corps of commoners and had imported foreign aristocrats to fill the officer ranks.⁵² In 1797 the senior officer corps was exclusively nobility⁵³, but in response to the requirement of creating a mass army to combat Napoleon, and urged on by the reformers, members of the bourgeoisie were admitted to the corps. After the wars, the conservative reaction to reform forced many of the bourgeois officers into the *Landwehr*. They were capable enough to be militia, but not of high enough character to be line officers. The officer corps slowly regained its noble character. In 1815 the officer corps was only 50%

⁵² Kitchen, German Officer Corps, p. xiii.

⁵³ Goerlitz, p. 17.

nobility. That percentage had increased to 53% in 1818 and was up to 66% in 1860. In 1860 the percentage of nobility among senior officers was overwhelming: 86%.⁵⁴ The common officers were concentrated in the artillery and engineers as these two services were considered of secondary importance and had none of the glamour of infantry or cavalry (additionally, the nobility were often not well enough educated to execute the technical tasks associated with artillery and engineering). There were a few common officers who had been promoted from the ranks due to exceptional merit or bravery and those who remained had completely assimilated noble ideas and virtues.⁵⁵

As the century progressed, the nobility could no longer keep up with the size of the army. By the 1850's there were not enough noble candidates to fill all the officer slots and the situation grew even worse after the reforms of 1860. The active army doubled in size and the nobility simply could not meet the demands of an increased officer corps. When the *Landwehr* and reserve battalions were incorporated into the line, many non-noble officers made the transition. By 1867 less than 50% of those taking entrance exams were of noble stock.⁵⁶ The rates in the artillery were so low that the Chief of Artillery, General von Hahn, implemented a special program to increase the percentage of nobility in his arm of service.⁵⁷ In addition, the success of business, commerce, and agriculture reduced the number of landowning nobility applying for the officer corps. There may have been an inverse relation between the profitability of agriculture and business and the

⁵⁴ Rosinski, pp. 97-97; Demeter, p. 28.

⁵⁵ Goerlitz, pp. 66-67.

⁵⁶ Demeter, p. 22.

⁵⁷ Demeter, p. 19.

number of nobility being commissioned.⁵⁸ In the past, to be an officer was a noble calling if not monetarily rewarding. By the late 1860's the promise of money was keeping the nobility out of the service.

Despite the reduction of the nobility in the army, the corps continued to attempt to cultivate aristocratic character and spirit. They promoted noble thought and discriminated against commoners. A telling fact is the fate of the few officers promoted from the ranks purely on grounds of bravery. Of those promoted during the war with Austria in 1866, none remained on active duty by 1871. The old style officers, through their haughtiness and elitism, made continued service unbearable.⁵⁹

While the nobility could not keep up with the growth of the army, other factors made it more difficult for the nobility to even enter the officer corps. Due to the demands of modernization, the War Ministry (supported by the General Staff) convinced William I to increase the education requirements for enrollment as an officer candidate. Previously, no specific education level had been required. If a nobleman could prove himself capable as a corporal and ensign, he could become commissioned. The new requirement of 1861 was that officer candidates had to have a certificate of fitness (the *Prima*) from a Prussian *Gymnasium* or *Realschule*. Additionally, any candidate who could not pass a German grammar course was to be disqualified.⁶⁰

The nobility, typically poor at this point in German history, could not afford the *Gymnasium* education required for admittance to the candidate pool. Besides the general education requirement, there were additional tests

⁵⁸ Demeter, pp. 26-28.

⁵⁹ Hazen, p. 154.

⁶⁰ Demeter, p. 80.

for candidates. These required attendance at officer cadet schools, or tutoring, and the poor nobility could not afford tutors. The middle class and sons of the new wealthy merchant class did have the required education and could afford the necessary tutoring. As the Military Cabinet, headed by Manteuffel, realized that the nobility were no longer qualified to become officers, it tried to implement exception policies. Candidates could have the education level waived, and many did so. Commanders at all levels were reminded that character and military spirit were more important than education and that educationally qualified middle-class officers could still be rejected.⁶¹ In each regiment, the officers had to vote approval of officer candidates. The still predominantly noble regiments would often refuse to accept educationally qualified bourgeois candidates because they considered the commoners a threat to cohesiveness.⁶²

Despite efforts to implement waivers, many nobles could not be accepted and many simply refused to take tests or to declare their intent to enter the service.⁶³ Military leaders lamented the loss of many of the nobility of small states. In a memorandum of November 1861, Edwin von Manteuffel wrote: "These [educational] regulations have discouraged not only the Mecklenberg nobility from entering the army, but our own as well; and our persistent widespread shortages of officers mainly dates from their entry into force."⁶⁴ Mecklenberg nobles (the Dönhoffs, Dohnas, and others) had traditionally

⁶¹ Demeter, pp. x and 82-83; Vagts, Militarism, p. 194; Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p. 114.

⁶² Craig, *Idem*

⁶³ Demeter, Table, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Edwin von Manteuffel, "Memorandum on the Preparatory Technical Education of Officers, 25 November, 1861", published as Appendix 6 in Demeter, p. 280.

been some of the bravest in the Prussian Army. Unfortunately, they had never been very bright (a saying in Prussia was "Dumb as a Dönhoff").⁶⁵

The requirements for education created a split among the leadership of the army. The War Ministry and the General Staff supported increased education levels. They realized the need for technical and educational skills to cope with modern technology. Manteuffel, on the other hand, thought that bravery and character were more important. More clearly, Manteuffel, as head of the Military Cabinet, was determined to maintain the noble character of the officer corps and he had the support of large numbers of officers. In one unsigned memorandum a group of officers asked if educated officers would support the king like they had in 1848.⁶⁶ Manteuffel quoted Frederick William III, "I need not only scholars but fighting officers!" and another anonymous general asked "whether any army could be run with only a lot of book-worms for officers."⁶⁷ Finally, Manteuffel threatened William I that he would have to commission non-commissioned officers and reminded the king that the officer corps had an ancient right to select their own.⁶⁸ William capitulated before the bluff (non-commissioned officers would be worse than bourgeoisie officers) and allowed educational waivers ("character, as well as knowledge... [are] needed to make a good officer"; zeal for the service compensates for education⁶⁹). However, the split within the military hierarchy was not healed. Von Roon, the War Minister, had had enough of Manteuffel's interference and helped Bismarck get the ultra-

⁶⁵ Vagts, Militarism, p. 194.

⁶⁶ Unsigned memorandum, Appendix 5 in Demeter, p. 278.

⁶⁷ Memorandum to King William I, 18 April 1862, Appedix 7 in Demeter, p. 282; Observations on Manteuffel's Memorandum, Appendix 8 in Demeter, p. 286.

⁶⁸ Manteuffel in Demeter, Appendix 7, p. 282; Appendix 6, p. 280.

⁶⁹ Demeter quoting and paraphrasing William I, pp. 82-83.

conservative Chief of the Military Cabinet appointed as Governor in Schleswig.

In addition to concerns over education levels, senior leadership thought that the overall character and military spirit of the officer corps was declining. William I was concerned over the increasing rowdiness of the cadets in Berlin and deteriorating behavior in garrisons.⁷⁰ Other leaders thought that officers were getting more deeply into debt and sacrificing their character by stealing.⁷¹ Part of the problem was blamed on the few bourgeois officers who had remained on active service and were now battalion and regimental commanders. Prince Frederick Charles felt that their standards were low and that they were using their position to influence their junior officers to vote acceptance on officers of low character.⁷²

Manteuffel acted to weed undesirables from the officer corps. Although his primary target were the bourgeois, he also removed incompetent nobility. Overage officers were eliminated as well. In an act of ideological defense, officers with questionable political beliefs were also eliminated. Through the charge of political liberalism, Manteuffel was able to eliminate many middle-class officers. By 1865 he had accomplished his task and had rejuvenated the officer corps. He later wrote that the cleaning of the officer corps was "my greatest political accomplishment; without this cleansing the victories of 1864, 1866, and 1870 would not have been won."⁷³

⁷⁰ Demeter, p. 24.

⁷¹ Prince Frederick Charles, in Demeter, pp. 262-263.

⁷² *idem*

⁷³ Manteuffel quoted in Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p. 113.

The officer's code of honor was also modified in real behavior. The 1830's saw a spate of duels. The leadership felt that many of the duels were caused by the difference between noble and common officers.⁷⁴ The Prussian Army established a method of regulating the officer code and dueling called the Courts of Honor. Every regiment had its own court and disputes between officers were supposed to be brought to the court. The courts would attempt to mediate between the officers. Frederick William IV tried to restrict the number of duels by imposing regulations and fines and making the resort to a Court of Honor a requirement, but the king's rules were often disregarded. The requirement to resort to a Court of Honor created a paradox similar to the one noted in the previous chapter. An officer who was not in fear of resorting to a duel, would never resort to the Court of Honor as this would show a lack of honor, courage, and character.⁷⁵

William I did not agree with Frederick William IV's regulations against dueling, but he did not change the set rules prior to 1871. While various forms of control were attempted, most failed and the final result prior to 1871 was that dueling was tolerated within the officer corps. In fact, if the Court of Honor's efforts to prevent a duel failed, it was required to act as umpire. This role of umpiring made the duel an official state act which could not be punished even though dueling had been outlawed. It appears that the only firmly enforced rule was that the use of firearms would result in punishment. Manteuffel was imprisoned because he shot a civilian and that case might have gone unpunished if the victim had not been a journalist. In effect, the Court of Honor became an umpire and the duel became an official

⁷⁴ Prince Frederick Charles. Demeter, p. 262.

⁷⁵ Demeter, p. 135.

state event.⁷⁶ Even the concerns of the king could not force the officer corps into new methods of insuring honor. As late as 1877, refusal to duel was grounds for dismissal from the officer corps.⁷⁷

Ideally, the officers corps saw itself as a self-contained, privileged section of society. Despite the ideals of its officer code, reality forced the army to both accept officer candidates from common families and bar some old noble families from service. As restrictions increased, the officers fell more within their own groups and attempted to strengthen their ideals and exclude newcomers. The attempts at exclusion often brought them into more conflict with their *oberster Kriegsherr*. No matter what the officer corps did to combat the deterioration of their body, the demands of an expanded army continued to penetrate their previously closed estate.

The Separate State and Politics:

The specific issues discussed in the preceeding pages all suggest that despite the differences between ideals and reality, the army was a separate state within the state. The army was conservative within an evolving progressive society; it granted itself the right to disobey the king; it attempted to exclude other influences from the officer corps. As the examples of the army's attempt to remain separate from society are clear, we will not further discuss the reality of the army as a separate state. However, the ideal of the army being aloof from politics is a key element in the real activities of the Prussian Army. As noted in the previous chapter, the concept of aloofness from politics is a highly semantic concept. In

⁷⁶ Demeter, pp. 136-138.

⁷⁷ Kitchen, German Officer Corps, p. 52.

reality, the army was influential in many aspects of Prussia's political life, both domestically and externally.

The army's inability to remain aloof from domestic politics has already been noted. It were used as a repressive tool of the government against popular movements and as a prize in the struggle between liberals and conservatives. Bismarck used the army as a tool in grouping support for the monarchy by engaging in warfare and it became involved in other political struggles. Manteuffel's removal of old or incompetent officers was also a political purge. Officers who voiced liberal ideas or associated with locals in garrison towns came under scrutiny. Manteuffel was famous for a remark about an officer who was friendly with civilians; "Very well, then we can count on him if the shooting begins."⁷⁸ Manteuffel meant that the officer would shoot at civilians, not a foreign enemy.

The military leadership was also concerned about the effect of politics on the army. In 1863 the army leadership renounced the right to vote, out of fear that the rank and file would become contaminated with liberal ideas.⁷⁹ In addition, the military conscripted far more soldiers from the politically dependable agrarian areas than from the cities. They were afraid that urban workers were already liberal, if not socialist, and Moltke feared that socialism was undermining patriotism and national loyalty.⁸⁰ The army became more and more politically isolated, and that isolation was self-imposed.

⁷⁸ Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p. 113.

⁷⁹ Vagts, Militarism, p. 200.

⁸⁰ Vagts, "The German Army of the Second Reich as a Cultural Institution", p. 185; Rothenberg, p. 305.

While William I may have instructed von Roon to create the Army Reform Bill purely on the need for military efficiency, the most fervent *Landtag* opposition to the reform was not fiscal cost but the political implications. The army considered the *Landwehr* militarily inefficient (the soldiers were overage and the officers often had only one year of line experience) as well as being politically unreliable.⁸¹ Other observers noted the vast political difference between the active army and the *Landwehr*.⁸² Meanwhile, the liberal parliament resisted attempts to reduce the size and importance of the *Landwehr*. The *Landtag* felt that the third year of service was not required to physically train the troops, but to insure that they were politically indoctrinated. William I did not help the cause by remarking that those soldiers who had had three years of active service were more loyal during the Revolution of 1848.⁸³ William I also noted that "blind obedience...require[s] a longer term of service.... It is precisely this blind obedience that the revolutionaries find most troublesome."⁸⁴ The army's demand for a third year of active service was designed to indoctrinate soldiers and this attempt at "decivilianization"⁸⁵ must be considered an incursion into politics. The conflict over the army reforms became so intense that William I considered abdication. Manteuffel advised him to hold his course even to the point of civil war while Wrangel warned the king that if he abdicated, the army would mutiny.⁸⁶ Through this type

⁸¹ Ritter, Vol I, p. 115.

⁸² Craig, *Politics*, p. 140; Hazen, p. 158.

⁸³ Kehr, p. 189.

⁸⁴ Ritter, Vol I, p. 110.

⁸⁵ Ritter, Vol I, p. 116.

⁸⁶ Craig, *Politics*, p. 100; Vagts, *Militarism*, p. 197.

of advice, the military leadership was making a significant impact on domestic politics.

In addition to the involvement in domestic politics, the army interfered in international affairs. The military leadership was vocal in its opposition to political figures who attempted to direct the use of the army and these objections had international repercussions. They were also opposed to diplomatic actions that ran counter to their own political beliefs. For example, after the London Conference of 1867 Moltke quarrelled with Bismarck over the neutrality of Luxemburg. Moltke saw the guarantee of neutrality as an act of conciliation towards France and could not understand why Bismarck was delaying the inevitable war with the French.⁸⁷ Although this case can be understood in terms of military plans, it goes beyond the army's own concept of aloofness.

The reaction to Bismarck's attempts to direct the use of the army have already been noted and there were other acts of opposition. First, the Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke, tried to establish a clear line between the realm of the military and that of politicians. He and the General Staff seemed to believe that once the war began they could engage in "purely military thinking" and that there was a clear difference between military and political problems. In addition, the General Staff was very ambitious in setting the scope of the military realm.⁸⁸ Moltke believed that politicians should give the military free rein once a war started. He wrote that diplomacy had its role before and after war. Once war started, the politician should leave matters to the soldiers and "neither diplomatic negotiations nor

⁸⁷ Kitchen, German Officer Corps, p. xix.

⁸⁸ Ritter, Vol I, pp. 195, 197; Craig, Politics, pp. 195-207, *passim*.

political considerations should interrupt the further military progress." Moltke also believed: "Politics uses war for the attainment of its ends; it operates decisively at the beginning and the end [of the conflict]..."⁸⁹

Moltke tried to act on his beliefs by excluding Bismarck from military planning during the Franco-Prussian War. In a final attempt to remove the army from political direction Moltke tried to gain recognition as a co-equal advisor to William I. Such a demand was in disregard of the relatively recent improvement in the status of the General Staff. The Chief of the General Staff received freedom to report directly to the monarch only at the beginning of the Danish Wars. He finally received permission to issue orders directly to commanders, in the name of the king, in the weeks prior to the war with Austria. Despite receiving these rights so late, Moltke demanded that his position be recognized as co-equal to Bismarck's in deciding questions of strategy and war policy. Moltke was asking for recognition of the importance of military power to Prussia and for William's acknowledgement of the preeminence of the military once war broke out. Bismarck naturally opposed the attempt and won when the king reminded Moltke that the military was subordinate to the political rulers of the state.⁹⁰ Incensed, Moltke considered resignation. One can understand Moltke's point only if one sees the military within the ideal special relationship between king and army. Moltke may have declared himself aloof from politics, however, he did not understand the range of political international repercussions from relatively simple military actions, e.g., moving into

⁸⁹ Moltke in Craig, Politics, pp. 196; Caemmerer, p. 85.

⁹⁰ Craig, Politics, p. 214.

Jutland, trying to take Vienna, or ordering repressive countermeasures against French partisans.

A further role in international politics was played by military attachés and the special military plenipotentiaries to the Tsar. Military attachés were a relatively recent European institution. Prussia appointed its first attaché to Paris in 1830 and charged him with observing and reporting on military events, organization and thought. He was also to be discrete and to avoid meddling in politics.⁹¹ The attachés were under the supervision of the diplomats and this created a split in loyalties between the War Office and the Foreign Office. Legation heads were supposed to see all reports the attachés sent out to ensure that the military was not engaging in political activities, but by 1869 reports on "purely military technical questions" were allowed directly to the War Minister.⁹² The attachés tended to expand their sphere beyond the purely military, but did not openly ignore their civilian masters until after 1871. However, the military plenipotentiaries in Saint Petersburg were never under such strictures as the normal attachés.

The Prussian plenipotentiaries were aides to the Tsar and reported directly to the Prussian monarch, circumventing normal diplomatic channels. They often acted contrary to the interests of the foreign office because they believed they "had the task of representing the immutable laws of honor and almost sacred friendship even when *raison d'état* was in conflict with them."⁹³ By addressing the Russians' "political concerns" and exaggerating the liberal threat, these military attachés took a direct role in politics.

⁹¹ Vagts, Military Attachés, pp. ix, 15.

⁹² Vagts, Military Attachés, p. 20.

⁹³ Gordon Craig, "Military Diplomats in The Prussian and German Service: The Attachés, 1816-1914", Political Science Quarterly, Vol LXIV, No 1 (March 1949): p. 73

During the discussions over neutrality during the Crimean War, the liberal parliament was in favor of aligning with the West, while the military was in favor of neutrality. Plenipotentiaries actually turned over Prussian mobilization plans to the Russians. This act could have led to the defeat of Prussia just to win a conservative victory for an 'aloof' military.⁹⁴ During the Crimean War, Otto von Manteuffel, the Minister President, had to resort to spies in order to steal copies of the reports being sent to the king.⁹⁵ While William I directed that copies of reports be sent to the Foreign Office and the Minister President, this did not stop the plenipotentiaries from acting as they saw best. During negotiations prior to the war with Austria, General von Schweinitz refused to relay communications that he did not consider completely truthful.⁹⁶ Despite the fact that the plenipotentiaries were uncontrollable and not responsible to any government office, they can be credited with maintaining the peace in 1850 and 1854 by stressing the bonds of friendship between the two courts.⁹⁷ As in the case of the attachés, it was not until after the establishment of the Second Empire that they became more destructive of government policy.

The position of the War Ministry was another political concern to the officer corps. Under the Constitution of 1848/50, the War Minister was responsible to the *Landtag* and was the only army officer who had to swear an oath to the constitution. The military leadership considered this a threat to their position because the parliament had some, even if slight, control over the military. The conservative leadership resolved to remove the army

⁹⁴ Craig, Politics, p. 133.

⁹⁵ Craig, "Military Diplomats", p. 72.

⁹⁶ Craig, "Military Diplomats", p. 73.

⁹⁷ Vagts, Military Attachés, pp. 283-284.

from parliamentary control via the War Minister.⁹⁸ One tenuous argument turned on the War Minister's position as an officer. In the event of a conflict between the king's wishes and those of the *Landtag* the Minister could claim that his oath to the king was more binding than the oath to a constitution that had been granted by the king. Soon, more easily managed expedients were created. First, the Military Cabinet, once a section of the War Ministry, was made a separate body. Under Edwin von Manteuffel, the Military Cabinet became a direct advisor to the king and handled all matters of personnel and administration. Promotions, transfers, commands, and retirements were all handled through this body and the *Landtag* lost all control over the personnel that made up the army. Manteuffel was soon able to circumvent the requirement that the War Minister countersign all orders pertaining to the military. That requirement was taken over by the Military Cabinet and the General Staff depending on the specific action. Finally, in 1866 the General Staff was separated from the War Ministry. Only limited functions were left to the War Ministry such as budget and logistics. When challenged by parliament, the War Minister could claim to have little influence over the army.⁹⁹

Despite their ideal concept of being aloof from politics, the army was heavily involved domestically and internationally. Many acts were taken to remove liberal influence from the army and to control the conservative nature of the state. These steps were defended as purely military efforts to improve efficiency, but were clearly political. Perhaps the only way that the

⁹⁸ Craig, *Politics*, p. 123.

⁹⁹ Vagts, *Militarism*, p. 188; Craig, *Politics*, pp. 115, 117, 125; Rosinski, p. 116.

army was not involved was that it did not vote and members did not run for public office.

The General Staff and Military Doctrine Prior to 1870:

The effects of modern technology drastically changed the conduct of war in the mid-nineteenth century. Breech loading rifles and artillery, increased ranges, primitive machine guns, railroads, and telegraphs all caused the methods of the Napoleonic Wars to be obsolete. No longer could armies expect to march on each other and then fire. No longer would there be long periods of mobilization and maneuver before battle was undertaken. The Prussian Army was a leader in developing and implementing new methods of warfare. The Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke, was an innovator and understood how to apply technology to warfare. Moltke watched the devastating effect of modern gunfire during the Wars of Italian Unification and the assault on the Düppel in the war with Denmark and understood intuitively that armies could no longer attack frontally. Railways and telegraph gave the military the means to avoid the frontal attack and hit the enemy where they could do the most damage, the flanks and rear. In response to the demands of modern warfare, Moltke developed the concept of the *Kesselschlacht*- the great encircling battle that cut off an army and forced it to surrender or be annihilated.¹⁰⁰

Moltke's belief in wars of annihilation were most clearly seen in the Franco-Prussian War when he quarrelled with Bismarck over the siege of Paris. He wanted to destroy the French armies so that they could never fight

¹⁰⁰ Rothenberg, p. 302.

again. He was not interested in settlement, only destruction. The advancements of technology gave the Prussian Army the means to conduct the *Kesselschlacht*. Rail lines allowed the army to operate on exterior lines and quickly move to the enemies flanks. Once on the flanks, the enemy could be engaged in a destructive cross fire while other forces were cutting off the means of escape. The battle of Sedan is a classic example. The French were decimated. Despite the defeat of the main French forces and their surrender, the war went on. Moltke then believed he had to destroy every French army in order to effect a satisfactory and lasting peace.

Because Moltke believed that numerical superiority was required on the battlefield, the evolution in battle doctrine also required that the armies become larger. Moltke usually thought in terms of fighting France, which would require a Prussian Army larger than one million men. In other words, Moltke's development of new doctrine drove the requirements for more soldiers and officers that caused many of the conflicts with ideal roles. As noted before, Moltke the innovator often failed to understand that strategy can affect domestic politics.

Finally, Moltke believed that future wars would be total wars tasking the entire fabric of a nation. He believed that wars would be fast and decisive, else the industrial and agricultural base of the nation would collapse. Moltke believed that "all the resources of the hostile government must be put under pressure-- its finances, railways, food supply, even its prestige."¹⁰¹ The partisan warfare of the Franco-Prussian War convinced Moltke that nations would become totally involved and would not surrender until completely defeated. His thoughts were echoed by military theorists who believed that

¹⁰¹ Ritter, Vol I, pp. 214-215.

in the future all wars would be "national war", which was the natural and absolute form of warfare. If warfare was to be conducted in the realm of the absolute, then the violence of war must also be absolute and the aim of warfare became the absolute destruction of the enemy armies.¹⁰² Moltke, and most other theorists, missed the equally valid point that wars could become long, drawn out affairs.

During the wars of unification the General Staff's importance and prestige grew immeasurably. This was due to Moltke's organization and leadership. As head of the General Staff he insured that new ideas on warfare were implemented and practiced. The General Staff compiled military histories of each engagement in the war of unification. Shortcomings were noted and practical lessons were noted. The histories were used to make improvements in tactics and doctrine. Moltke and the Prussian Army had an advantage many theorists never have-- battle. Sadowa and Sedan were used to perfect the *Kesselschlag* and by 1871 the Prussian Army was the most respected military power in the world. Their methods were copied everywhere and Moltke's concepts of speed, maneuver, and annihilation were carried forward into the Twentieth Century.

This chapter has explored and documented just some of the many ways that the demands of reality forced divergence from the ideal roles of the Prussian military. The pressure and requirements of daily life precluded the military from acting in the purely military world. The army had to acknowledge and react to the presence of another world outside the military.

¹⁰² Colmar von der Goltz, The Conduct of War, (Kansas City, Missouri: The Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company, 1896), pp. 17, 19.

Its actions to protect its beliefs and position led the military to violate its own ideals. The next chapter will compare and contrast the pre-1871 ideal and real roles with the theories of Jomini and Clausewitz.

CHAPTER 5: THEORY, IDEALS AND REALITY 1830-1871

Theory and practice should be cognizant of each other, but it is erroneous to expect them to coincide.

...one often quotes theories, but seldom reads them.¹

Having described the intent and actions of the Prussian Army from the 1830's to 1871, let us consider the theoretical basis for the ideal and real roles just described. Of the two theorists discussed in Chapter Two, who had the greater influence on the ideal roles of the Prussian Army? The answer is clearly Jomini, and not Clausewitz.

Government:

The Prussian army was certainly not Clausewitzian in its concept of the proper form of government. Remember that Clausewitz was interested in liberalizing the government in order to create greater popular involvement

¹ Paret, "Clausewitz and the Nineteenth Century", p. 29; An unknown German officer lecturing at the War College in 1935, in Wallech, p. 3.

in the state.* He, along with the other Napoleonic era reformers, believed that the military had to be popularized in order to harness the greatest possible strength. The role of the monarch had to be reduced and the voice of the people considered when making decisions on issues of war, peace, and armaments. Clausewitz was afraid of unbridled acts of kingship. For example, he believed that Prussian subservience to France after the defeat at Jena and before Napoleon's invasion of Russia was the act of a king who could and would act against the will of the people. Clausewitz was not concerned so much with the morality of absolutism, but that the state would be more militarily efficient if the government was liberal and popular. The hope of the reformers was to make the Prussian Army strong enough to defend itself against France and regain the honor lost from 1806 to 1813.

Jomini, on the other hand, believed that an efficient military required the consolidation of political and military power in one person. While emerging from the tumult of the French Revolution and recognizing the power and potential of mass national armies, Jomini was not an advocate of republican government. He recognized the efficiency of power combined in the person of Napoleon. Some of Jomini's writings made appropriate bows in the direction of popular control of the army, but at heart he believed that the best government was one where political authority and military command were vested in the same person. More clearly he believed that popular government would diminish military efficiency, especially if those 'affected by party spirit' had control of the budget.

There can be no doubt that the Prussian military prior to 1871 rejected any form of popular government or even limited popular control over the

* Ideas and facts documented in previous chapters will not be redocumented here.

army. As noted by Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, the army was more royalist than the king. Both monarch and military believed in Divine Right and absolutism and the struggle against restrictions on the monarchy continued into the 1860's and 1870's. The fight between crown and parliament over the army reforms was as much over budgetary control as it was over the politics of the army. Manteuffel, while one of an extreme group, threatened to carry the constitutional struggle to the point of civil war in order to destroy the restrictions of constitutional monarchy.² Army concerns over the *Landwehr* were as much due to a perceived lack of military efficiency as to the liberal political bent of those forces. Von Roon and William I considered the Landwehr "politically false" and were known for their belief that a third year of service was required to instill proper devotion to the monarch and unwavering support of absolutism. Moltke believed in the monarchist state because "it allowed officers to manage military affairs without interference from nonprofessional elements."³ None of these beliefs of the Prussian Army corresponded to the theories of Clausewitz.

The Military and Policy:

Jomini's comments on an army bound by the dictates of an "Aulic council" make clear his belief that the army commander must be free to act as he sees fit. War was like chess and could only be played in the realm of the purely military. Clausewitz's view on the role of politics in warfare is best summed up in his most known and quoted sentence: "War is nothing but the

² Craig, War, Politics, and Diplomacy, p. 100.

³ Holborn, p. 285.

continuation of policy with other means." He goes on to specify that even in the actual conduct of war, policy can not be subordinated to the needs of the purely military.

Time and again the Prussian Army showed, in thought and deed, that they hewed to the Jominian line. Even Moltke, who listed Clausewitz's On War as one of the five most important books in his life,⁴ insisted that the commander should be free on the battlefield. In 1871 he wrote: "Political considerations can be taken into account only as long as they do not make demands that are militarily improper [against the nature of war] or impossible."⁵ Earlier we noted his belief that diplomacy is important only at the beginning and the end of a conflict.

The acts of the Prussian army in 1864, 1866, and 1870-71 are clear evidence that the military wanted to be free from political considerations once the conflict started. They were either reluctant to act if they thought an operation held no military benefit (the Düppel in 1864), or wanted to continue a conflict despite the attempts of the diplomats to negotiate a peace (France in 1871). In some cases they acted against the wishes of the king and in some cases Bismarck had to convince even William I that his actions were not in the best interest of the state. While the army eventually submitted to the will of the politicians in every case, it did not like the interference and acted to exclude politicians from planning meetings and conferences. Again, the Prussian Army acted more in line with Jominian concepts than Clausewitzian.

⁴ Moltke, Moltke as a Correspondent, p. 262.

⁵ Rothenberg, p. 298.

Staffs:

Both Jomini and Clausewitz were supporters of the development of military staffs. They both recognized the need for professionally trained officers to handle the increasingly complicated demands of planning, mobilization, movements, and records keeping. Both Jomini and Clausewitz were staff officers and neither commanded in battle. Each was an expert in the development of military staffs.

Until the wars with Denmark, the Prussian government did not seem to recognize the importance or the most efficient use of the General Staff. Each of the Chiefs of the General Staff operated in relative anonymity until Moltke was granted recognition and power in the wars of unification. Once Moltke gained powers of wartime command in 1866, the importance of the Prussian General Staff exploded. Through solid planning, historical analysis, unity of command, and peacetime innovation, the General Staff became the primary source of Prussian military supremacy. Despite its success, the Chief of the General Staff did not gain full peacetime powers of advisement to the Emperor or command of the army until 1883.⁶

Despite the fact that both Jomini and Clausewitz were staff officers and examples to the Prussian Army, we can trace the written trail of influence to Jomini and not Clausewitz. Clausewitz does not specify the role of the General Staff in On War and completely ignores the issue of logistics.⁷ This should not surprise us. Clausewitz was writing on the theory of warfare not on the more practical matters that would include a discussion of the role of the staff. Jomini, however, was writing a practical handbook for the

⁶ Goerlitz, p. 97.

⁷ Wallach, pp. 19-20.

commander. A discussion of staffwork was applicable to Jomini's intent and he has been noted as the most effective writer on staff in the Napoleonic period. While we can not determine the impact of Clausewitz's performance as a staff officer, positions he held for only two or three years of his career, we do know that Clausewitz worked to implement staff procedures. It is not obvious that either Jomini or Clausewitz wielded greater influence in this area.

The Types and Extent of Warfare:

Prussian belief in the type and extent of warfare again seem to follow the Jominian lead. While Clausewitz believed that reality limited the conduct of war, the Prussian military seemed to believe that warfare in the age of nationalism had become total and absolute. This belief reflects the thought of Jomini who believed that all wars of nationalism would be absolute using all the national resources at hand. The desires of the military to take Vienna in 1866 and Moltke's desire to humiliate the French and utterly destroy their army in 1871 indicates that the Prussian Army believed in total war, if total war is defined as the mobilization of all of the state's military and economic resources and the destruction of the enemy's corresponding resources. However, the actual conduct of war prior to 1871 does not allow us to do more than form some hypotheses. The three wars of this period did not involve the mobilization of all German resources and, therefore, did not become total war for the Prussian state. Moltke did resolve during the Franco-Prussian War to destroy all of France's resources to combat guerrilla tactics. Here we are left with a 'feeling' and without firm proof.

However, we can be sure that the Prussian military, following the lead of Jomini, believed in the supremacy of offensive operations. While they may

have recognized the use of the defense, they believed that offensive spirit and action, coupled with proper tactics, would overcome defensively oriented and entrenched forces. The difficulty of taking the Düppel did not change Prussian beliefs. They saw the possibility of much greater bloodshed in future engagements against modern forces (the Danes were using muskets, not breech loading, rifled weapons), but thought that maneuver against the flanks and rear of enemy forces would reduce the impact of modern weaponry. Despite Clausewitz's dictate that the defense was the stronger form of warfare, he also knew that offensive operations were required to win wars. Strategic defense merely prevented an attacker from winning its overall objectives. Moltke seems to have believed in using the defense only to draw the enemy into an unfavourable position, or as a prelude to the counteroffensive. There is little difference in the writings of Jomini and Clausewitz when it comes to the use of the tactical offensive. They only disagree on the strategic defense. As the Prussians did not engage in any defensive wars during this period, we can not discover how they would have reacted to Clausewitzian thought.

The Battle:

We can make much more definitive statements when we consider military doctrine and the purpose of The Battle. Jominian battle doctrine was based on the holding of terrain. His system of maneuver and the massing of troops at the decisive point were attempts to drive the enemy from its position. Taking and holding strategic positions forced the enemy government to negotiate. He believed that the taking of an enemy capital was necessary, both for political symbolism and to geographically uproot the enemy government from its center of communications and power.

Clausewitz believed that the intent of battle was to destroy enemy forces. He believed that destroying the enemy's army forced the opposing government to come to the negotiating table. The Prussian Army followed neither theorist in entirety.

In the case of taking enemy capitals, the Prussian military tended to agree with Jomini. Moltke believed that "as a rule" taking the enemy capital would end the war.⁸ His belief was confirmed in his desire to march on Vienna in 1866, but during the Franco-Prussian War his intent was less clear. He resisted the bombardment of Paris because he thought it more necessary to defeat the French forces in the field. However, he wanted to take the capital. He was merely reluctant to participate in bloody battle like Sebastopol in the Crimean War, and compared a siege of Paris to that battle.

Other than the taking of enemy capitals, the Prussian Army disregarded the Jominian concentration on geography and focused their operations on the destruction of enemy forces. The use of the maneuver was not to force the enemy out of position, but to attack the flanks and rear and annihilate the enemy. Moltke rejected Jominian dictates for the use of interior lines, as did other German military theorists. Bernhardt called the use of interior lines Jomini's "mysterious arcanum of victory".⁹ Moltke recognized that modern transportation allowed for the rapid use of exterior lines and allowed the attacker to quickly move to the enemy flank. In the case of Sedan after taking the flank, the Prussians poured fire on the enemy from the two sides and the front. The French had no choice but to attempt to escape, but the Prussians were too fast. The French were surrounded and Prussian fire took

⁸ Coemmerer, p. 156.

⁹ F. von Bernhardt, On War of To-day, (London, 1912) quoted in Wallach, p. 20.

them from all sides. In a classic application of Clausewitzian thought, the Prussians kept up the fire until the French could absorb no further losses and pleaded for terms.

Moltke's great innovation was realizing that if he delayed in joining his armies for battle until the last moment, he could wait until the enemy had committed himself. In the past, armies had maneuvered until a battle was forced. Friendly armies would converge and join either the day before the battle or at a spot within easy marching distance of the selected battlefield. During the war with Austria, after the Crown Prince and the Austrian commander, Benedek, blundered into each other, Moltke realized he could use superior rail assets to unite the rest of his forces on the battlefield. Moltke may have improvised his way to victory in 1866, but in the future he planned on the late convergence of his forces on the battlefield. In this way he could wait until the enemy committed himself and the Prussian forces could march directly to the enemy's flank and/or rear.¹⁰

While the destruction of the enemy was in line with Clausewitzian theory, Moltke displayed one very un-Clausewitzian characteristic. Clausewitz believed that only in the realm of absolute war did the enemy army have to be completely destroyed. In real warfare (limited warfare), only enough of the enemy had to be destroyed to impress the enemy government that they would have to negotiate before being totally destroyed. Nor did Clausewitz believe that numerical superiority was a requirement of victory.¹¹ While he believed it best to use all available forces, generalship and genius were more important. Clausewitz went on to declare that the threat of action was, in

¹⁰ Caemmerer, p. 191.

¹¹ Clausewitz, p. 194.

some cases, as effective as actual battle.¹² Moltke did not believe in the bluff. He felt that once forces were brought together they had to be used and that one never allowed his forces to converge unless the commander intended to commit them to battle.¹³ Once the battle began, Moltke forced the fulfillment of the *Essen/schlacht* and the annihilation of the enemy. Only by completely destroying the enemy could Moltke believe that Prussia was safe from future attack. Clausewitz had concluded that annihilation was just one possible component of the means of war.¹⁴

The Use of History:

In a final area of comparison, the Prussian use of history was more in line with Jomini than Clausewitz. Clausewitz believed that a study of military history made certain universal truths or theories apparent. Jomini used history to illustrate the truth of his principles. The Historical Section of the General Staff compiled reports and dispatches and produced histories of battles. The histories were used to illuminate lessons learned.¹⁵ While the development of 'lessons learned' might be in line with Clausewitz's inductive approach, this was not the case with the Prussians. Their histories were often altered to make the lessons more apparent. Junior officers were depicted as executing maneuvers exactly in line with the wishes of their superiors, even when they acted without receiving orders. The General Staff used history to prove the validity of the theory of encirclement.¹⁶ This

¹² Clausewitz, pp. 180-181.

¹³ Caemmerer, p. 215.

¹⁴ Wallech, p. 18.

¹⁵ Holborn, p. 290.

¹⁶ Wallech, p. 41.

seems more in line with Jomini's didactic approach where the great captains confirmed the truth of principles and theory.¹⁷

Based on the preceding comparisons, in most cases the Prussian Army followed the lead of Jomini rather than Clausewitz. In fact, it would appear the Jomini had an even greater influence than Clausewitz in the realm of the ideal than in the actual execution of duties. This is an especially interesting conclusion when remembering that Clausewitz was writing in a much more theoretical and idealized form than Jomini, who was concerned with the way the army actually acted in war. Yet, the Prussian Army used the theory of Clausewitz in the development of battle doctrine, while following Jomini in aspects tangential to the actual conduct of war. Absolutism, combination of military and political leadership, and aloofness from politics are all Jominian concepts. There are several explanations. First, Clausewitz was of the reform movement and his influence on the ideal roles of the military were swept away in the wave of reaction following the Napoleonic Wars as the conservative forces in the military reestablished themselves in the state. Secondly, Clausewitz, by exploring the philosophic, was not as useful to the soldiers. Most of Jomini's thoughts were based on practical execution of duty. Third, Jomini did not acknowledge that his theory could evolve, but the reality of modernization negated important aspects of his tactical thought. Clausewitz's philosophical writings were more applicable in the modern world of railroads, breech loading artillery, and telegraph lines. Jomini's concepts of the actual conduct of battle could not use modern technology, so the Prussians followed Clausewitz in the development of their

¹⁷ *Alger*, p. 20.

real role of fighting wars. When Clausewitz wrote on the conduct of war in the real realm, the Prussian military leadership recognized the validity of his thought and incorporated it into military doctrine.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The main idea underlying the state is defense against the enemy without.

Carl von Clausewitz¹

The previous chapter compared the theories of Jomini and Clausewitz with the ideal and real roles of the Prussian Army. Based on that comparison, it is obvious that the Prussian Army before 1871 did not adhere to the basic tenets of Clausewitzian theory. The doctrine of the *Keese/schlacht* and the Battle of Annihilation are based on Clausewitz's theory of absolute war, but ignore Clausewitz's application of his own theory to the world of reality. Moltke's development of doctrine and tactical theory may have had Clausewitz as a starting point, but went well beyond the original intent of On War. To Moltke, all war was in the realm of the absolute and required the annihilation of the enemy.

¹ Clausewitz in Ritter, Vol I, p. 212.

While the Prussian Army may have used Clausewitz as a starting point in the evolution of military battle doctrine, it ignored the heart of Clausewitz's teachings. Instead of subordinating itself to government policy, the army attempted to build barriers between the military and the rest of the state. The attempt to think and act in the purely military realm ignored the impact of the army on domestic and international politics. While the state, or Bismarck personally, managed to overcome any transgressions of the Prussian Army, the potential for negative diplomatic repercussions is obvious. In the wars with Denmark, Austria, and France, the demands of the military did not consider the effect on the rest of Europe or the possibility that other Great Powers might become involved.

Throughout this paper the Prussian Army has usually been described as an organization with unified outlook and concerns. The few occasions of disagreement among the highest levels of the army have been noted as exceptional cases. While a unity of outlook can be accepted both because the officer corps was homogenous and because of the impact of discipline and ideological training on the rank and file, there were some differences among the senior army leaders. Differences between agencies of the army led to disharmony between ideal and real roles. While Manteuffel objected to any change in the old order and moved to remove liberals and bourgeois from the officer corps, Roon was willing to make compromises with the *Landtag*. Moltke wanted change to be directed from above, and it was he who forced the greatest changes in the real roles.

Moltke recognized that modernization and technological advances required changes in strategy and tactics. The accuracy and extended range of new rifles, the speed of fire and lengthened range of breech loading

artillery, the speed of rail movement, and increased control through the use of telegraph lines demanded that the army move away from the old style of tactics-- maneuver followed by a battle of frontal charges. Technology forced the military to abandon the frontal charge and attempt to gain the enemy flank and rear. Envelopment and annihilation demanded that the attacker have numerical superiority over the defender. The evolution of military doctrine demanded larger and larger armies.

The Army Reform of 1860 created a larger standing army, and it was exactly this enlarged army, the eventual centerpiece of conservative plans against liberal opposition, that doomed the Prussian Army's ideal roles. The nobility simply could not officer an enlarged army. They were forced to accept not only middle class officers, but industrial workers. Both the middle-class officers, ostensibly similar to the nobility after the stringent selection process, and the industrial workers, brought liberal thought into the army. The battle waged by Manteuffel was lost by Moltke's demands for a change in doctrine and Roon's idea for a larger standing army. Not only did the War Ministry lose control of the General Staff and the Military Cabinet, but the three leading military organizations were at cross purposes.

The demands of modernization also chipped away at the concept of obedience to the *oberster Kriegsherr*. While, as we have seen, the senior army leadership never really felt required to offer perfect obedience, the demands of modernization and specialization further supported disobedience based on professional competence. As technical requirements drove military operations, rail deployments, or logistics, the military was more justified in opposing their less technically oriented *oberster Kriegsherr*. Another ideal role was tempered due to modernization.

If the Prussian Army was not following Clausewitzian theory, the reasons for the disharmony between the ideal and real roles become more apparent. The Prussian Army's ideal roles were based more on the concepts of state and military organization expressed in Jomini's writings. The state, as embodied in the King and under absolutist rule, was to decide the pace of reform, if any. The Prussian Army ideals of absolutism, obedience, or honor were effective only if the military retained its position separate from the rest of society. The special relationship between King and noble officers had to remain. Despite the position of extremists like Manteuffel, some change was permissible, but it had to come from above and it could not affect the position of the army.

These concepts of state organization and control were challenged by the political liberalization of the Prussian people. The French Revolution, the July Revolution, and the Revolution of 1848 all showed the possibility for political change and popular participation in the governing of Prussia. In effect, the ideal roles of the Prussian Army were challenged by the idea of popular government. As seen in Chapter 4, the army was more active in quelling domestic strife from the 1830's to 1864 than in defending the state from external aggression. The "enemy without" was threatening, and the army made plans to deal with it, but it was the enemy within that garnered the physical attention of the army. The Constitution of 1848 was forced on Frederick William IV by popular revolution, no matter that he defined it as a writ from above. The *Landtag* was popularly elected and opposed the policies of the government and the further separation of the army from the people. The unification of Germany and the exclusion of Austria were all liberal ideas that were accepted by the army only after Bismarck demonstrated that they could be achieved in a conservative manner. Each of

these liberal ideas forced changes or adaptations of ideal roles in the real world.

Efforts against the liberalization of the German people were also seen in the army's relationships with other nations. The army's stance with Russia and Austria and against a liberal plan for unification in 1849 and 1850 and, later, the inclination of the army to side with Russia during the Crimean War went against the policy of the government, as well as the desires of the general population. The policy against France was based as much on ideological fears as on a heritage of conflict between the two nations. The army was against any possible liberalizing influence, be it French inspired or coming from the desires of the Prussian people.

Due to its opposition to liberalizing influences, the army's real roles either grew apart from their ideals or became intensified attempts to retain their special position in the state. Manteuffel's opposition to the *Landtag* and his apparent willingness to force civil war were acts of desperation in the face of growing liberal demands, while the defense of the state was turned inward against the Prussian people.

While the growing support of liberal politics among the Prussian people, and the internal demands for military and governmental reforms forced some changes in the ideal and real roles of the Prussian Army, was there a more parochial reason for defending the Prussian *status quo*? Alfred Vagts has claimed that the army was only protecting its own position and had little concern for the other changes in Prussian society.² However, while this claim is partially true, it ignores the greater challenge to the roles of the

² Vagts, Militarism, p. 15. (See Chapter 3, FN 4).

Prussian Army. The Army never ignored the threat of the "enemy without" and convincingly defeated the Danes, Austrians, and French when the long peace ended in 1864.

The military defended the conservative *status quo* because they believed it the best and most efficient way of maintaining the position of Prussia in Europe. The organization and control of the state was challenged by liberal politics at the same time that the demands of modernization were forcing changes in army structure and their methods of warfare. In the face of these simultaneous threats, the Prussian Army acted to defend absolutism and the special position of the nobility. Of course, there were economic and prestige reasons for defending the special position of the nobility as officers. The poor nobility needed the employment offered by the Prussian Army and those jobs could only be guaranteed under monarchical control of the state. But the threat to the nobility was only one part of a greater threat to the power of Prussia. Prussia was a military power and only by maintaining the old system of monarchy, nobility, and army could the military ensure that Prussia remained a European power.

Despite the Prussian Army's defense of the old domestic order, their very success at defeating foreign enemies drove changes that would eventually destroy the old order as well as Germany herself. The establishment of the Empire created a greater Germany and the need for a larger army. The cycle of the previous years was repeated as more and more middle class officers and industrialized soldiers joined the ranks. The constitution of the Empire (based on universal male suffrage but government unresponsive to the people, the continuance of a strong monarchy, and the position of the army

separate from society) promised continued political opposition. While the ideal roles of the Prussian Army were only slightly changed from 1830 to 1871, their real roles grew further from their ideals and further separated the army from society. The increasing size of the army led to increasing politicalization of the military just as the society was becoming increasingly political. The process of change begun prior to 1871 culminated not in the revolts of 1918, but in the mass political army of 1934-1945 and the destruction of Germany.

APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Helmuth Von Moltke (1800 -1891):

Helmuth von Moltke was born at Parchim in Mecklenburg in 1800. He came from a long line of soldiers; the family had served Danes, Austrians, and Prussians. His father had served the Danes and Prussians during the Napoleonic Wars attaining the rank of General in the Danish Army. Helmuth entered the Copenhagen Military School when he was 12 and he studied there until he was 18. From this early age he was known to be industrious, intense, and intelligent.

Moltke received a commission in the Danish Army, but by 1822 he accepted a commission in the Prussian Infantry. He attended the War Academy in Berlin and remained there for five years. While at the academy he began studies of ancient history and military history. By 1828 Moltke was attached to the Prussian General Staff.

By the 1830's, Moltke was respected in the army. He began to write military and political pieces, such as have been quoted previously in this paper. (See his Essays, Speeches, and Memoirs, listed in the Bibliography.) In the mid-1830's he took a long trip to the Mideast and visited Greece and Turkey. In 1835 he was engaged as an advisor to the Ottoman Sultan, Mahomed II. He traveled during his four years under the Sultan and prepared maps of the area. In 1840 he was back in Berlin on the staff of the 4th Army.

Moltke continued performing staff work and in 1857 he was appointed Chief of the General Staff by the regent William I. He worked to increase the role and power of the General Staff, and was usually successful in that goal. In 1859 he was granted the right to report directly to the War Minister. He advised the conduct of the Danish War and in 1866 he was given the authority of giving direct orders to the Army, in the King's name. By 1870 he was, in effect, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Armies. His only failure in this regard was in not gaining equal footing as the Chancellor in advising the King, and then Emperor, on matters of policy.

Moltke was born noble and maintained a conservative political outlook throughout his life. He considered emigrating from Germany during the Revolution of 1848 after he thought the King had given in to the popular demands of the masses. He supported the three year term of service as a device to politically indoctrinate soldiers. He opposed the acceptance of the middle-class as officers, but his own plans for modern warfare demanded an increase in the size of the Prussia and German Armies. After 1871 he planned for the possibility of a two front war against the French and Russians. His final plans called for a holding operation against France while Russia was quickly defeated, the opposite of the later Schlieffen Plan.

Moltke retired in 1888 after over 60 years of active service. He died in 1891.

Edwin Von Manteuffel (1809-1885):

Edwin von Manteuffel had a long and controversial career as one of modern Prussia's most radical monarchist conservatives. During the Revolution of 1848 he advised the king, in a bold act far in excess of his

position or authority, to resist the mobs and clear the city. During his entire life he was an advocate of absolutism and the separation of the Army from any popular or governmental control.

Gordon Craig suggests that it was Manteuffel who convinced Frederick William to eliminate the oath of the army from the 1848 Constitution. He was in the camarilla that advised Frederick William and could be counted on for conservative advice in opposition to any reforms in the army or the government. During the constitutional crisis over the army reforms, Manteuffel was willing to push until the situation developed into civil war. He knew that the army would win a war and that the king could then revoke the constitution. He never retreated from his opposition to the parliament and the constitution.

Manteuffel was Chief of the Military Cabinet from 1858-1865. During this period he was responsible for wresting all control over personnel matters away from the War Minister and, thus, from parliamentary influence. He succeeded in circumventing the War Ministry and in gaining control over most personnel matters. Most importantly, he was able to end the requirement for the War Minister's signature on orders concerning personnel questions. Without this signature requirement the War Ministry lost control and visibility over promotions, selections, decorations, and punishments.

Manteuffel's other achievement was in purging the officer corps of inept and bourgeois officers. He was adamantly opposed to any reduction in the aristocratic exclusivity of the officer corps. He fought education requirements because they reduced the ability of poor nobility to receive commissions. In this matter he openly battled the War Minister, his nominal superior, and gained the enmity of von Roon.

Manteuffel's differences with Roon went beyond insubordination. While Manteuffel was willing to activate a coup during the constitutional crisis, Roon was willing to compromise with the *Landtag* in order to avoid civil war. Manteuffel undermined a 1865 Bismarck-Roon initiative to end the conflict over the army reforms. After that, Bismarck and Roon were determined to end Manteuffel's influence. They convinced William I to appoint Manteuffel as Governor of Schleswig in 1865. Although away from Berlin, Manteuffel continued to have some radically conservative influence until his death in 1885.

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